

# STARS AND STRIPES®

**He's a whopper:  
16-pound baby  
born in Brazil**

Page 11



**Aid groups: U.S.  
military shouldn't  
exit tsunami zone yet**

Page 14



**Vick needs help from  
teammates to reach  
Super Bowl**

Back page

Atlanta quarterback Michael Vick

Volume 2, No. 285 © SS 2005 MIDEAST EDITION

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 2005

## U.S., Iraqi troops start joint pre-election patrols

Page 4

Poll: Most Iraqis say they'll vote; car bomb kills 21 near Shiite mosque Page 3

Commander in chief has a ball with military Page 10



President Bush and Army Spc. Jazmin Azcona, left, along with U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Richard Devon Hanse, right, and first lady Laura Bush dance Thursday at the Commander in Chief Ball in Washington. The ball — an exclusive gala that was free for 2,000 uniformed guests who served in Iraq — was one of nine official balls Bush attended after his inaugural ceremonies.

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## News Tracker ... What's new with old news

### States

**Robert Blake trial:** A former police detective testified that Robert Blake wanted to "whack" the woman carrying his child if he couldn't force her to have an abortion.

But William Welch, who worked at the time for Blake as a private investigator, told jurors in Blake's murder trial Thursday that he didn't immediately tell police about Blake's plans because he didn't believe the actor would carry them out.

Defense attorney M. Gerald Schwartzbach pointed out that when Welch ultimately told his story to police, he said he did not think Blake was talking about killing Bonny Lee Bakley when he used the word "whack."

**Md. governor's reporter ban:** Gov. Robert Ehrlich's ban prohibiting state employees from talking to two journalists at The (Baltimore) Sun does not infringe on their free-speech rights and has not hindered the reporters from doing their job, the state attorney general's office said in a court filing.

The office, which is representing Ehrlich, asked a federal judge to deny The Sun's request for a preliminary injunction lifting the ban.

The governor's Nov. 18 directive "does not deprive the plaintiffs of anything to which they are constitutionally entitled," the attorney general's office said in a response to the motion filed Tuesday by The Sun.

The Sun wants the ban lifted until the case is argued in court and there is a decision. No date has been set.

**Comm. execution appeal:** The state Supreme Court on Thursday again refused to hear what would be New Genoa's first execution in 45 years, but said it will hear two more appeals from groups trying, against serial killer Michael Ross' wishes, to keep him from being put to death next week.

The court will hear arguments Friday from public defenders and the attorney for Ross' father, Dan Ross. They assert that a judge this month improperly barred them from filing post-conviction appeals on Michael Ross' behalf.

Ross has admitted murdering eight women in Connecticut and New York during the 1980s and raping most of his victims. He is scheduled to receive a lethal injection shortly after 2 a.m. Wednesday. The date was set in October after Ross fired his public defenders and hired a private attorney to help him expedite his execution.

**UCLA body parts probe:** An investigation into a corpse-selling scandal at UCLA has resulted in recommendations for new security measures that include implanting barcodes or radio-frequency identifiers in cadavers, officials said Wednesday.

UCLA suspended its willied-body program early last year after the director was arrested for investigation of dealing in stolen body parts. A body parts dealer who is not affiliated with the University of California system was also arrested. A third UCLA employee was fired.

Former Gov. George Deukmejian, who led a task force that investigated the case, told University of California regents Wednesday that the probe revealed a "clear lack of standards" in accounting for specimens, keeping records and oversight.

**Unmanned Saturn mission:** David Atkinson spent 18 years designing an experiment for the unmanned space mission to Saturn. Now some pieces of it are in space.

Someone got to turn on the instrument Atkinson needed to measure the winds on Saturn's largest moon.



**Haji pilgrimage:** Female pilgrims make their way to throw pebbles at pillars symbolizing Satan the last ritual of their Haji pilgrimage in Mina, outside of Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on Thursday. The Haji pilgrimage is required to be performed at least once for every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it.

**Across the Muslim world, the faithful also marked Eid al-Adha, or the Feast of the Sacrifice, the most important holiday in the Islamic calendar on Friday.**

"The story is actually fairly gruesome," the University of Idaho scientist said in an e-mail from Germany, the headquarters of the European Space Agency. "It was human error — the command to turn the instrument on was forgotten."

Officials for the European Space Agency said last week they would investigate to learn what happened. They were not available for comment on Thursday, nor did NASA officials immediately respond to telephone messages.

**Church abuse case:** A jury was seated Thursday to hear the child-rage case against defrocked priest Paul Shanley, one of the most notorious figures in the Boston Archdiocese sex scandal.

Opening statements are set for Monday.

Eight men and eight women will hear the case. They will later be split into a 12-member jury and four alternates.

Shanley, 73, is accused of molesting a former altar boy. The alleged victim, now 27, said Shanley raped him repeatedly at St. Jean's parish in Newton between 1983 and 1989, beginning when he was 6.

**Drunk ship captain:** A ship captain was convicted of operating a commercial vessel while drunk and banished from U.S. waters for one year.

Janos Gyori, 52, also was fined \$3,000 on Wednesday for the Jan. 11 incident, in which the 214-foot freighter General Lee was denied entry to the Port of Hampton Roads.

A Coast Guard crew boarded the Pana-

ma-flagged ship about 10 miles off of Norfolk after requests for the ship to remain 12 miles offshore for a security check were ignored.

Gyori was arrested after Coast Guard sea marshals smelled alcohol on his breath. Gyori failed six field sobriety tests but refused to take a breath test.

**S.C. Confederate license plates:** A South Carolina Senate committee has passed a bill that would allow the Sons of Confederate veterans to get back some of the money made through selling its special license plates.

While the SCV license tags have been on the road for years, profits from them now go into the state's budget.

"All we want to do is be treated like other people who have a special tag," said Don Gordon, chairman of the state SCV's Heritage Defense Committee.

The tags cost \$30 more than regular license plates. After covering administrative and production expenses, the remaining money would go to Gordon's group. Gordon did not know how much the tag sales would raise. "It is a minimal, minimal amount of money," he said.

### World

**Omagh bombing:** The 1995 car-bombing of Omagh — the deadliest terrorist attack in Northern Ireland history — won the right to a retrial Friday.

The Court of Criminal Appeal in Dublin ruled that Colm Murphy, 52, was wrongly convicted of aiding the Irish Republican Army dissidents responsible for the Omagh attack, which killed 29 people and wounded more than 300.

Murphy had been found guilty in January 2002 of supplying two cell phones used by the IRA dissidents to deliver the car bomb to Omagh. He received a 14-year prison sentence.

Murphy's legal team filed an appeal that specified 45 grounds for possible quashing of the conviction. The appellate court accepted two complaints: The original court mis-handled evidence from two Irish detectives, who illegally amended their handwritten interrogation notes; and the original court had made illegal references to Murphy's previous convictions.

**Pakistani Indian conflict:** Pakistan's military on Friday denied India's claim that Pakistani soldiers fired at Indian positions in Kashmir in violation of a 14-month cease-fire.

India has accused Pakistani troops of firing twice this week across the border that divides Kashmir between the two nations. Neither incident caused casualties, and Indian troops did not retaliate, Indian officials said.

**Mark Thatcher case:** Sir Mark Thatcher, convicted in South Africa of participating in a coup plot, said Thursday in London, that he hopes to soon rejoin his family in the United States.

Thatcher, 51, spoke briefly to reporters as he left the home of his mother, former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Last week, Thatcher pleaded guilty to unwittingly helping bankroll a botched coup plot in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea. He was fined \$506,000 and given a suspended jail sentence and was allowed to leave South Africa.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



Shanley



Thatcher

# Car bomb at mosque hits Shiites during big holiday

At least 21 dead, dozens hurt as Shiites targeted

By BASSEM MROUE  
The Associated Press

**BAGHDAD** — A car bomb exploded Friday outside a Shiite mosque where worshippers were celebrating a major Muslim holiday, killing at least 14 people and wounding 40, police and hospital officials said — the latest violence ahead of this month's elections.

The car blew up outside the al-Taf mosque in southwestern Baghdad, where Shiites were celebrating one of Islam's most important holidays, Eid al-Adha, or Feast of Sacrifice. The feast coincides with the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

Attacks on Shiites have increased before the Jan. 30 parliamentary and provincial elections. Friday's blast was the second outside a Shiite mosque in the capital this week and it came a day after a chief terror leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, berated Shiites in an Internet audio recording that appeared aimed at sowing division in the country.

Iraq's Shiites — a community that was oppressed for decades — strongly support the vote, believing it will propel them to a position of influence equal to their standing as the country's majority group. They make up an estimated 60 percent of the Iraq's 26 million people.

But militants among the Sunni Arab minority — which lost privilege when their patron Saddam Hussein was toppled — have vowed to stop the election. Some Sunni clerics and politicians have called for a boycott, saying violence in Sunni areas will keep people from the polls and skew the outcome of the balloting against them.

In a new Internet audio recording, a speaker purported to be al-Zarqawi, Iraq's most feared terror

## U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Thursday, Jan. 20, 2005, at least 1,368 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,073 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said.

The figures include three military civilians. The AP count is four higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Wednesday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Ukraine, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan, one each each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major

combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,230 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 964 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ No deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by military:

■ Army Pfc. Jesus Fonseca, 19, Marietta, Ga.; killed Monday when a vehicle-borne explosive detonated in Ramadi, Iraq; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Casey, South Korea.

■ Army Capt. Christopher J. Sullivan, 29, Princeton, Mass.; killed Tuesday when an explosive detonated near his vehicle in Baghdad; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

war leader, denounced Iraqi Shiites for fighting alongside U.S. troops and asked Iraqis to prepare for a long war against the Americans.

Al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian-born leader of Iraq's al-Qaida affiliate, ridiculed Iraq's most prominent Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and berated Shiites for fighting against their Sunni countrymen in the U.S.-led assault on Fallujah in November.

"They broke into the safe houses of God," the speaker said of Shiites. "They defiled them and they hung the photos of their Satan, al-Sistani, on the walls and they spitefully wrote: 'Today, your lord, tomorrow it will be your honor.'"

The authenticity of the tape could not be verified.

An official at Baghdad's Yarmouk Hospital said the car bomb at the mosque killed at least

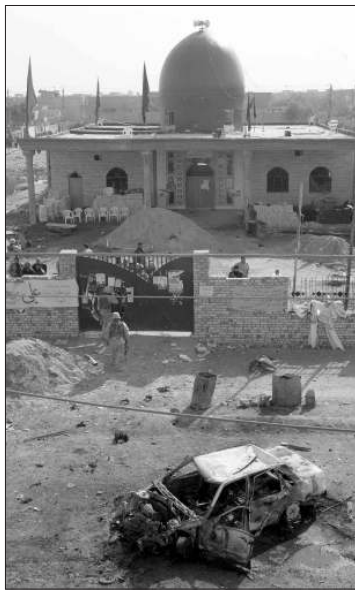
14 people and wounded 40 others. It exploded as worshippers were leaving prayers in the building, a witness said, leaving several cars in flames and showering the area with twisted debris.

Dozens of weeping men and women frantically searched the hospital for news about loved ones feared caught up in the bombing.

A distraught man sat beside his dead 14-year-old son, covered with a sheet, and cried out, "I had breakfast with him this morning. I told him, 'Let's go to your grandfather,' but he insisted on going for prayers first."

A woman dressed in a black cloak, or abaya, fainted as she identified the body of her son in the hospital's morgue and was carried away by relatives.

During Friday prayers at Baghdad's Um al-Qura mosque, a prominent Sunni cleric issued a fresh call for putting off the elec-



**U.S. soldiers and the Iraqi police secure the area following a car bomb explosion in front of a Shiite mosque in Baghdad on Friday. The blast came as worshippers were celebrating a major Muslim holiday, killing at least 21 people and wounding dozens, police and hospital officials said.**

tions until the country is more secure and free of its foreign occupiers.

"How does the government call for holding elections at a time when it cannot protect places of worship in the country?" Sheikh Mahmoud al-Sumaidi said.

"It is important to have a country free from occupation forces before holding elections. Then the elections will become an Iraqi demand rather than a foreign demand and at that point we can choose our leaders," he said.

In the 90-minute message from al-Zarqawi, which was posted on the Web Thursday, the insurgent

leader called on his followers to show patience and prepare for a long struggle against the Americans, promising that "ferocious wars ... take their time" but victory was assured.

A U.S. soldier was killed Friday during a pre-dawn raid north of Baghdad, the military said.

The soldier from Army's 1st Infantry Division, whose name was withheld pending notification of family, was killed in an operation against members of an insurgent bomb-making cell in the town of Duluiyah, the military said in a statement.

One Iraqi was killed in the raid and another soldier was wounded.

# Poll finds vast majority of Iraqis planning to vote

By KARL VICK  
The Washington Post

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — An overwhelming majority of Iraqis continue to say they intend to vote on Jan. 30 even as insurgents press attacks aimed at rendering the election a failure, according to a new public opinion survey.

The poll, which was conducted in late December and early January for the International Republican Institute, found 80 percent of respondents saying they were likely to vote, a rate that has held roughly steady for months.

The 64 percent who said they were "very likely" to vote was a dip of about seven percentage points from a Novem-

**“Despite the efforts of the terrorists, Iraqis remain committed to casting their vote on election day.”**

Lorne Craner

director, International Republican Institute

ber survey, while those "somewhat likely" to vote jumped five points.

Western specialists involved with election preparations said they were struck by the determination and resilience of ordinary Iraqis as they anticipate their country's first free election in half a century.

"Despite the efforts of the terrorists, Iraqis remain committed to casting their vote on election day," IRI director Lorne

Craner said in a statement.

The organization, which is funded by Congress through the National Endowment for Democracy, commissioned the poll, which surveyed Iraqis in all but two of the country's 18 provinces.

Poor security made two in the far north, Nineveh and Dohuk, inaccessible. The margin of error was plus or minus 3 percent.

"I think people will be shocked," said an official of another international organization that is deeply involved in preparing Iraq's nascent political class for the ballot.

The official, who insisted that neither he nor his organization could be identified more specifically because of security concerns, said most Iraqis remain intent on exercising their right to elect a government after decades of dictatorship.

"I think the real story of this election is what's gone on beneath the radar," the official said.

"They may not know what they're voting for. But I think they recognize it's something called democracy."



**Left:** An Iraqi child watches a member of an Iraqi unit called the Freedom Guard, during a joint U.S.-Iraqi patrol of Tamim district in Ramadi, Iraq, on Wednesday.

**Right:** Staff Sgt. Ricky Thomas, of Company A, 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, patrols the streets of Tamim with an Iraqi soldier.

PHOTOS BY JOSEPH GIORDONO/Stars and Stripes

# U.S., Iraq start joint security patrols

BY JOSEPH GIORDONO

Stars and Stripes

**RAMADI, Iraq** — American and Iraqi troops have begun joint patrols as the final pieces of the massive security operation for the Jan. 30 elections begin to take shape.

On Wednesday, soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment and an elite Iraqi unit dubbed the Freedom Guard walked side by side through the markets and streets of the Tamim district of Ramadi, drawing smiles and stares from curious crowds.

"Iraqi, Ameriki," some of the bystanders yelled, placing their two index fingers together in an Iraqi gesture meaning "together."

The first joint patrol for the two units inaugurates a relationship U.S. commanders say will be crucial in achieving two goals: providing security for the vote, and creating an eventual exit for the 150,000 U.S. troops in Iraq.

"This is one of the best things we've done since getting here," said 1st Lt. Judson Bennett, executive officer of unit's Company A.

"The Iraqis are seeing a local face on the troops in the streets, and they're giving it a good reception. It's hard to beat," said Bennett, 25, from Vancouver, Wash.

Indeed, when the patrol drove to the center of the main market in Tamim and emerged from American armored vehicles, the crowds of locals seemed a little confused. The Iraqi soldiers — many of whom fought alongside U.S. Marines in the November Fallujah offensive — quickly took up security positions and showed tactical discipline that pleasantly surprised the American soldiers.

Soon, the Iraqis and Americans were walking through the markets, mingling with growing crowds of men, women and children. The Iraqi soldiers, a bit tense in the beginning, began smiling and joking with the locals.

"This is what these guys can do that we can't," said Staff Sgt. Steve Molinhaus, a 33-year-old infantry scout from Orlando, Fla. Molinhaus and the rest of the battalion are among 3,500 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division troops who deployed to Iraq from South Korea last fall.

The irony of joint American and Iraqi forces, which fought against each other in two wars over a decade's span, was not lost on many.



**U.S. and Iraqi troops conduct a joint patrol in the main marketplace of the Tamim district.**

"Man, this is downright strange," said one soldier, as English and Arabic transmissions crackled across military radios.

The Iraqi soldiers' presence made an immediate difference. When a group of children near a fruit stand in the market began screaming and crying after seeing the troops, an Iraqi soldier walked over, calmed them and bought them a bunch of bananas.

A few minutes later, a child from a different group of youngsters approached the Iraqi commander of the Freedom Guard — who goes simply by the name Lt. James — and said he knew where insurgents lived nearby.

"I held a few pieces of candy and said I'd give them to him if he pointed out the house. And he did," Lt. James said.

It was at an early, unthinkable, because of the language barrier alone, if the patrol had been made up only of U.S. troops.

The soldiers searched the house, discovering what the Iraqi troops called a "martyr's room," which they said had been used as a preparation site by suicide bombers. The room contained green banners, fundamentalist religious writing and a portrait of the presumed martyr.

While not a massive discovery, the find was a small example of what U.S. officials hope the joint patrols — and eventually, an Iraqi defense force capable of standing on its own — lead to.

The first major test for the Freedom Guard, and other similar Iraqi units, will come in less than two weeks. The American military, wary of appearing to influence the vote, is handing the Iraqis the closest line of physical security at the polling stations.

E-mail Joseph Giordono at: giordono@jstarsandstripes.osd.mil

## 1st ID GI killed in N.Y. to be honored

BY STEVE LIEWER

Stars and Stripes

**WÜRZBURG, Germany** — Services will be held Thursday in Marietta, Ga., for a 1st Infantry Division soldier who was shot and killed outside a nightclub Jan. 9 while on leave in New York.

Staff Sgt. Terrence Balkisson, 25, had deployed last February as a supply sergeant with the division's headquarters command. He flew home just before New Year's to visit his extended family there, one of the last of the division's soldiers to go on rest and recuperation leave.

According to New York newspaper accounts, Balkisson had been out at a nightclub in Brooklyn called Ambiance with two of his brothers.

Family members told reporters that a man the brothers didn't know opened fire outside the club about 5:20 a.m.

The New York Post reported that one of Balkisson's brothers may have been arguing with a female friend of the gunman.

Balkisson reportedly was shot twice while his brother Lawrence, 24, was hit six times and remains hospitalized.

A day later, Joseph Carington, 23, of New York, turned himself in to police and was charged with second-degree murder, attempted murder, and assault, according to media reports.

Balkisson, the oldest of 13 children, had immigrated with his family to New York from Trinidad at age 16. He joined the Army seven years ago, said Spc. Rebecca Sharpton, a 1st ID spokeswoman. His wife, April, two children and two stepchildren live in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Balkisson will be buried at Marietta National Cemetery in Georgia following a graveside service.

Sharpton said a memorial service at his unit's headquarters in Würzburg is expected but has not yet been scheduled.

Among other awards, Balkisson had earned an Army Achievement Medal and two Army Good Conduct Awards.

He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his service in Iraq.

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**Pfc. Jimmy Giron** uses a metal detector to search an empty lot in Abu Ghraib, Iraq, for weapons caches on Jan. 5. Soldiers from 1st Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment have spent the past few weeks searching the town.

JASON CHUDY/Stars and Stripes

## 'It's like an Easter egg hunt'

### Soldiers dig for hidden weapons around Abu Ghraib

BY JASON CHUDY  
Stars and Stripes

ABU GHRAIB, Iraq — When Pfc. Jimmy Giron of Company B, 7th Engineer Battalion, found a weapons cache in the front of a house recently, his buddies said it seemed as if he'd witnessed the birth of his child.

"You should have seen the look on his face when he pulled those mortars out of the bag," said 1st Lt. Daniel Hurd, 1st Platoon leader with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment. "It was priceless."

The platoon, along with their assigned soldier from the Fort Bragg, N.C.-based engineer battalion, is on a nearly constant hunt for weapons caches in this troubled city, which is just north of Baghdad International Airport.

Giron's find contained seven 60 mm mortars, one 82 mm mortar, eight mortar fuses, shotgun shells, papers with technical data for accurately firing the mortars and a remote control garage door opener which soldiers believed would have been used to trigger roadside bombs.

The tools of Abu Ghraib insurgents' trade include assault rifles, machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, artillery shells and mortars — especially mortars.

The U.S. base nearest to this mainly Sunni city is Logistic Base Seitz, which sits at the very northwest corner of Camp Liberty, the largest single contingent of U.S. troops in Baghdad.

Seitz is frequently mortared from the town, and one attack in January 2004 killed one U.S. soldier and injured about three dozen more U.S. soldiers and civilians.

The town's main streets are also popular spots for roadside bombs, one of which killed Spc. Dwayne McFarlane Jr. on Jan. 9.

On Wednesday, Giron was on the hunt again, root-

ing through small fenced-in yards at a rundown apartment complex. Scanning the ground with his detector, he occasionally stopped to insert a metal probe into the earth. If he strikes something solid, he'll dig it up. Giron said the insurgents like to place the caches under such items as piles of dirt, sand and garbage. "There's dirt everywhere and garbage everywhere," said Giron about Abu Ghraib. "[Caches] could be anywhere, sometimes the last place you expect. We've got to be lucky, I guess."

Most of the caches aren't very large and are meant for easy access.

"[Insurgents] place short-term caches here," Hurd said. "There's lots of yards available for short-term caches. You'll find stuff [buried] only an inch deep."

Despite the large amount of ground Giron and the platoon cover, they have been fairly successful. "In the past couple of weeks, we've found three caches," Hurd said, explaining that they've only been assigned to the sector for two weeks.

Hurd said that they expect the caches to become harder to find as time passes. "They know what we're looking for, so they'll get more complex [in hiding them]," he said. "They'll adjust."

But if the insurgents have to bury their caches deeper in the ground, or in less accessible areas, it might take them longer to recover and use them. With other companies from 2-14 also operating in Abu Ghraib, this extra time may mean that more insurgents are caught in the act of hiding or digging up caches.

Hurd said they want to get as much as they can. Earlier in the patrol he had tried to talk some kids into trading mortars for his pocketful of candy. "It's like an Easter egg hunt," he said. Easter eggs, however, don't explode during normal use.

E-mail Jason Chudy at: chudyj@mail.estrp.esd.mil

## U.S. investigating contractors' deaths

BY JOSH WHITE  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — U.S. officials are investigating the deaths of two American contractors who were ambushed last month in Iraq after one of them told government officials he was concerned about his financial dealings with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense.

Government officials and co-workers of Dale Stoffel, 43, say they are unsure whether his death and that of a colleague near Taji were somehow related to his complaints about lack of payment and the potential for corruption, or whether the two men were victims of the more random violence against Americans by insurgents.

A Pentagon spokesman said Thursday that the Defense Department is investigating the killings but would not comment further. An FBI spokesman said he could not comment on this incident but said the agency investigates all deaths of American civilians in Iraq. The deaths were the subject of an article in Thursday's Los Angeles Times.

Stoffel and Joseph Wemple, 43, were killed after their BMW SUV was rammed head-on as they drove from a meeting with U.S. military officials in Taji. A business colleague said the meeting was held to discuss ways to improve financial accountability for large projects they were about to begin. Both men were shot sever-

al times about 10 miles from the base in Taji, and photos of their possessions were later posted on a radical Islamic Web site.

Stoffel had negotiated a contract to rehabilitate Soviet-era tanks, armored personnel carriers and other armored machinery for Iraqi security forces to use, according to colleagues at U.S. CIA Inc., a Pennsylvania-based consulting firm where Stoffel was executive vice president.

Stoffel was administering the umbrella contract through his own firm, Wye Oak Technology, but CIA was poised to do much of the work, colleagues said.

In December, Stoffel began to complain about being paid and expressed concern that the way Iraqi officials were handling finances could lead to problems, said William Stein, president of U.S. Stoffel wrote letters to the Pentagon and to several government officials trying to ensure transparency and accountability for the contract, Stein said.

Stein said Stoffel and Wemple were in Iraq for most of 2004, working on projects in the Green Zone for the U.S. government. Stoffel returned home around Thanksgiving and had "misgivings" about going back to Iraq before financial matters were sorted out, he said. He returned to Iraq days before he was killed and had a meeting with an Army general at a base in Taji that was centered on discussing the financial problems, Stein said.

## VA raises cap on loans for housing to \$359,700

BY LEO SHANE III  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Current and former military personnel will be able to buy more expensive homes this year, thanks to changes in limits placed on no-down-payment loans offered through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Guidelines approved by Congress in November have upped the maximum amount veterans can borrow for home loans to \$359,700, nearly 50 percent more than last year's \$240,000 loan ceiling.

Keith Pedigo, director of the department's loan guaranty service, said officials had been pushing for the change because of the rising price of homes in major metropolitan areas such as San Diego, Washington and New York.

"The \$240,000, while it was sufficient in most areas, wasn't nearly enough in some of those high-cost areas," he said. "Now our veterans will always be on par with other, conventional loans. It makes them very competitive in the market."

A guaranteed home loans are available to most veterans and servicemembers, including reservists. The program allows the

department to provide a financial guarantee to lenders on the military buyers' behalf, which in turn allows the mortgage company to offer even lower interest rates on the loan even without a down payment.

In the past, Congress revisited the loan ceilings periodically to adjust for housing price increases, Pedigo said.

**“The \$240,000 ... wasn't nearly enough in some of those high-cost areas.”**

Keith Pedigo  
Department of Veterans Affairs

said, and takes into account regional spikes in housing prices. He expects the larger loan amount will let many servicemembers purchase new homes they previously could not afford.

"It's too soon for the word to have gotten out about the changes, so we haven't seen an increase in loans yet," Pedigo said. "But I think that will start happening in the coming weeks, especially in the major metropolitan areas where we've seen prices increase the most."

For more information:  
www.homesloans.va.gov  
e-mail: leo@shanej.com  
shanej@stripes.esd.mil

## Army charges soldier who refused deployment

The Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — The Army has brought charges against a soldier who refused to return to Iraq for a second combat tour because he has no objects to war, officials said.

Sgt. Kevin Benderman notified his commanders Dec. 28 that he was seeking a discharge as a conscientious objector. He then refused orders to deploy with his unit Jan. 8 while the Army processed his objector claim.

Benderman was charged with desertion and a second count that accuses him of intentionally skipping his deployment flight, officials said Thursday.

"My response to those charges is not guilty," said Benderman, 40. "I am prepared to deal with whatever consequences my action brings."

Benderman, an Army mechanic with 10 years in the military, spent eight months in Iraq in 2003 with the 4th Infantry Division from Fort Hood, Texas. He transferred to Fort Stewart after returning from the war.

Though he never fired a gun in combat, Benderman says the misery he saw firsthand — including a badly burned young girl and mass graves filled with dead women and children — led him to seek objector status.

Fort Stewart commanders contend Benderman still had an obligation to deploy with his unit while they considered his conscientious objector application.

# Commander testifies in British abuse trial

BY TONY CZUZKA

The Associated Press

OSNABRUECK, Germany — The commander of three British servicemen accused of mistreating Iraqi detainees testified Friday that he told soldiers to make their prisoners "work hard" picking up garbage but saw no abuse.

The British case has provoked uncomfortable comparisons with the scandal over abuse of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad — particularly when graphic photos emerged depicting naked prisoners apparently undergoing abuse from British soldiers.

The mistreatment allegedly happened in May 2003 at an aid warehouse compound outside Basra where the three soldiers were posted after British forces moved into southern Iraq. The allegedly abused Iraqis had been detained for looting.

Defense lawyers argue that the three were following orders by Maj. Dan Taylor, their commander in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, to make detainees "work hard."

They say the defendants had unclear legal guidance on how to treat common criminals as the army shifted from combat to a policing role.

Prosecutors have said the "work hard" order was illegal, but argue the soldiers should have known it was wrong to abuse detainees.

Taylor testified Friday that he ordered the soldiers to get tough on looters after the situation got so bad that even warning shots would not keep thieves away from the warehouse.

"We seemed to have an increasing number of looters in there. Nothing made any difference," Taylor

testified during the soldiers' court-martial at a British base in Germany.

Taylor said he came up with a plan he dubbed Operation Ali Baba to deter stealing.

"I was going to talk to them, they were then going to be given some work to do, we would talk to them again, and they were then going to leave the complex," Taylor said.

He said he cleared his crackdown order with a superior officer.

He said he later he walked by as the captives were cleaning up garbage and saw no abuse. He said he didn't think at the time that his order was illegal. "I didn't believe it was breaking any laws or regulations," he said.

The trial revolves around photos taken by a soldier from Royal Regiment of Fusiliers who was arrested in England after bringing the film to be developed.

Some of the photos show a bound Iraqi being dangled over a loading dock by a forklift, another being subjected to a simulated kick and a simulated punch, and both Iraqis stripped and forced to feign sexual acts together.

Lance Cpl. Darren Larkin, 30, has pleaded guilty to one count of battery after prosecutors alleged he was the man shown in a photo standing with both feet on a tied-up Iraqi lying on the ground. He has pleaded not guilty on other charges.

Lance Cpl. Mark Cooley, 25, is charged with tethering the detainee to the forklift and simulating a kick and a punch against the other detainee, seen in two separate photos. He has pleaded not guilty.

Cpl. Daniel Kenyon, 33, the highest-ranking defendant, has pleaded not guilty to several counts of failing to report abuse to superiors.

## Five Danish troops charged with mistreating Iraqis

BY JAN M. OLSEN

The Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — A Danish army captain and four military police sergeants were formally charged with mistreating Iraqi detainees at a military camp near Basra last year, prosecutors said Friday.

The captain, who was not identified, was charged with four counts of negligence while on duty.

The officer and the four soldiers were charged with verbally humiliating detainees "by using insults such as dogs and pigs," denying them food and water, and forcing them to kneel in uncomfortable positions while they were being questioned, military prosecutor Peter Otken said.

The charges related to three separate episodes in March, April and June 2004.

Capt. Annemette Hommel, who last year had faced allegations similar to those in the charges, told The Associated

Press that she had no comment, and referred any other questions to her lawyer, who couldn't immediately be reached.

Otken, who declined to name the captain, citing Danish privacy rules, said that prosecutors would seek a jail sentence for the officer. The maximum sentence is a year in jail.

The Judge Advocate Corps also said the four military police sergeants had been charged for having forced detainees to sit "in stressing positions," by forcing them to kneel, legs crossed, and propped on the heels of their feet.

Two of the military police sergeants also were charged with dragging a detainee so his pants were pulled down to his ankles.

If found guilty, the sergeants also could face a one-year jail sentence each.

No date for a trial has been sent.

Denmark has 501 troops in Basra, 60 miles southeast of Baghdad.

## Iraq's hands-on air force



A handprint in blood adorns the side of a U.S.-made C-130 transport plane given to the Iraqi Air Force in Baghdad on Wednesday. Iraqis traditionally daub new motor vehicles with a handprint of blood from a sheep slaughtered especially for the occasion, to bring good luck. The U.S. Air Force has delivered a total of three C-130 Hercules planes to the Iraqi Air Force.



Above: U.S. special forces escort Iraqi Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi after the delivery of a C-130 to the Iraqi Air Force in Baghdad on Wednesday.

Below: Iraqi Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi chats with Iraqi crew members of a C-130.



## After suing Army, GI wants to re-enlist

The Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — A soldier who sued the Army for requiring him to serve past the date of his enlistment contract apparently wants to stick with the military, after all.

Spc. David Qualls, 35, has volunteered for another six-year stint in the National Guard, Capt. Kristine Munn, a National Guard spokeswoman, said Thursday.

"It's interesting, knowing his past," Munn said. She said she wasn't sure if Qualls would qualify.

Qualls is now back in Iraq after he and seven other unnamed U.S. soldiers filed a lawsuit last month challenging the military's "stop loss" policy, which allows the extension of active-duty deployments during times of war or national emergencies.

The lawsuit, filed while Qualls was on leave, argues that the enlistment contracts are misleading because they make no explicit reference to the policy. The eight soldiers are believed to be the first active-duty personnel to file such a lawsuit.

A judge denied Qualls' request for a restraining order after the government argued that allowing Qualls to stay on leave would set a dangerous precedent.

# MILITARY UPDATE

Tom Philpott

## Criteria for First Command restitution

An estimated 13,000 military investors who bought and later terminated a "Systematic Investment Plan" marketed by First Command Financial Planning Inc. of Fort Worth, Texas, are due restitution payments in the coming weeks that likely will average a little over \$300.

Letters of explanation are being mailed to a list of qualified former First Command investors at last known addresses. An enclosed verification form must be signed and returned, said lawyer Wayne Secore, an independent consultant hired to distribute a total of \$4 million to eligible former investors.

The payments are part of a \$12 million settlement First Command reached with the Securities and Exchange Commission and

National Association of Securities Dealers, the private-sector regulator of the securities industry, after the agency found that the company had misled investors. The remaining \$8 million is to be used for investor education programs for servicemen and their families, the population to which First Command has sold systematic plans for years.

Only a fraction of former First Command investors are eligible for restitution. They must meet all of the following criteria:

■ Purchased a Systematic Investment Plan on or after Jan. 1, 1999.

■ Terminated the plan, in writing, on or before Dec. 15, 2004, the date the SEC settlement.

■ Paid an effective sales charge greater than 5 percent, which presumably SEC views as reasonable for some higher-priced load funds.

Payments to individuals will vary. They are to get back any sales charge they paid that exceeded an effective rate of 5 percent, plus interest.

Year 1999 is significant because the SEC found that "at least" from that year forward, First Command used a "structured sales process" that included "misleading statements and omissions" to persuade military people, mostly officers and midgrade or senior enlisted, to invest in systematic plans.

These plans, which the company stopped selling last December, allowed investors to buy mutual-fund shares indirectly by making fixed monthly contributions, from \$100 to \$500, over at least 15 years.

The plans impose a unique sales charge, or load, set at 50 percent of the first 12 payments, and

no charges thereafter. If the investor makes the required 180 payments, the effective charge falls to 3.3 percent. But the SEC said most systematic investors pay substantially higher sales rates than are customary, even for load mutual funds. That's because, based on First Command's own data, only 43 percent of investors make the required 180 payments.

The SEC quoted from company sales scripts that said no-load mutual funds, which generally are popular, "frequently have some of the highest long-term costs" and are intended primarily for "speculative" investors.

"In reality," said the SEC, "the average long-term costs of owning no-load funds are substantially lower than the costs of owning load funds, and many long-term investors invest in no-load funds."

First Command, a registered broker-dealer, has offices near most military bases including overseas. It claims to be biggest provider of financial plans to the military with more than 297,000 "military families" as customers. That includes 40 percent of current star-rank officers, one-third of all commissioned officers and 16 percent of non-commissioned officers. Almost all of First Command's 1,000 agents are former officers or NCOs.

Former investors who believe they qualify for restitution but have not received a letter can contact Secore. His e-mail is: [secore@secorewall.com](mailto:secore@secorewall.com). His mailing address is: Wayne M. Secore, P.C. Secore & Waller, L.L.P., Three Forest Plaza, 12221 Merritt Drive, Suite 1100, Dallas, TX 75251.

To comment, write Military Update, P.O. Box 23114, Centerville, OH 45801-1114. e-mail: [milupdate@aol.com](mailto:milupdate@aol.com) or visit [www.militaryupdate.com](http://www.militaryupdate.com)

## A Raptor comes to Langley

By KIMBALI PAYNE

The Daily Press

HAMPTON, Va. — After taxiing the F/A-22 Raptor to a stop, Lt. Col. James Hecker climbed down the ladder strapped to the side and planted his feet on the Tarmac.

"Welcome back," said one of the small group of pilots and trainees gathered to greet him.

"Welcome home," countered Hecker, who commands the 27th Fighter Squadron. "You guys ready to start doing this?"

Hecker's landing shortly before 3 p.m. Tuesday brought the Peninsula the first operational F/A-22 Raptor to call Langley Air Force Base home — a Raptor that came in earlier this month will be used solely for maintenance training.

The stealthiest and costliest jet in Air Force history, the Raptor will start training maneuvers in Hampton Roads airspace as early as Thursday.

The arrival was delayed a few hours by high cross winds, but



Lt. Col. James Hecker banks an F/A-22 into a right turn during one of several fly-bys before landing Langley Air Force Base's first operational F/A-22 Raptor in Hampton, Va., on Tuesday.

once above the base, Hecker introduced the Raptor with a series of low flybys.

"We wanted the world to see that we are bringing in the first jet here," said Col. Tom Tinsely, the director of operations for the 1st Fighter Wing. "Of course, I, 'Hey honey, I'm home.'"

Tinsely will spearhead the training program on the Raptor that will test not only pilots and mechanics but also the entire logistical system at Langley including tower controllers and support squads.

"Anytime wheels leave the

ground we get training in, not just for the pilot, for everybody," Tinsely said. "For that one airplane, you still need a minimum number of things to happen."

The Air Force will use different schedules and scenarios to maximize training on the new aircraft over the next few months as more of the jets arrive.

Some days maintenance crews will practice quick turnarounds to prepare for short-notice missions. Other times, the jet will be grounded for whole days so crews and pilots can get comfortable with the ins and outs of the Raptor in larger groups.

## Marines suspend testing of Osprey

'Operational pause' due to gearbox problem

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. — The Marine Corps has suspended flights of the experimental tilt-rotor Osprey aircraft after officials discovered that the coating of a crucial part is wearing off faster than expected, the military said Thursday.

Osprey flights were put on "operational pause" Tuesday, but could resume next week, said spokeswoman Capt. Mariel Zammit of Marine Corps Air Station New River, home to the only Marine squadron that is testing Ospreys. The squadron is awaiting new parts and a new Osprey built with an improved gearbox.

The problem is that the thin, chrome coating on an "input quill" a part within the gearbox that transfers power to the rotors — flakes off, forcing mechanics to replace the boxes.

In six instances, worn equipment has caused a warning light to come on inside the aircraft that indicates a problem with its gearbox, military officials said.

"We changed a couple in December, and we are down to zero in our supply," said Col.

GleNN Walters, commander of the Marine Tiltrotor Test and Evaluation Squadron 22, which has 14 of the aircraft.

A review of the Osprey, which can take off and land like a helicopter but fly like an airplane after its rotors shift from vertical to horizontal, is scheduled for Jan. 27, when program officials are expected to decide whether the move forward with testing.

The gearbox problem will be a consideration, but the military still expects to move into the next phase of Osprey tests in February or March, Walters said. The testing could be complete as early as July.

The Marine Corps has ordered 360 Ospreys, the Navy 48 and the Air Force 50 for special operations. The aircraft, if approved for full production, would replace an aging fleet of CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters.

The Osprey was grounded for about 18 months following a pair of crashes in 2000 that killed 19 servicemen in Arizona. Four Marines were killed in another crash that year when an Osprey went down during a training mission near Jacksonville.

## Commander of sub that ran aground reassigned until investigation complete

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Navy has reassigned the commander of an attack submarine that ran aground Jan. 8 in the western Pacific Ocean, officials said Thursday.

Cmdr. Kevin Mooney, who commanded the USS San Francisco,

was reassigned to a unit in Guam pending the completion of the investigation into the crash, a statement from the U.S. 7th Fleet said. Vice Adm. Jonathan W. Greener, the fleet's commander, ordered Mooney's removal from command.

The nuclear-powered San Francisco

was on its way to Australia when it struck an undersea mass of rock that was not on the ship's charts.

Machinist Mate 2nd Class Joseph Allen Ashley, 24, of Akron, Ohio, died of injuries suffered during the crash, and 23 other members of the crew were injured.

The submarine, with a crew of 137, was conducting underwater operations about 350 miles south of Guam.

The vessel sustained severe damage, but the vessel's nuclear reactor was unaffected.

The San Francisco made its way back to its home port in

Guam under its own power. Its outer hull remained intact, but its inner hull remained intact.

Cmdr. Andrew Hale, deputy commander of the Guam-based Submarine Squadron 15, will assume command as commanding officer of San Francisco.

The 7th Fleet's statement did not assign blame for the crash.

## IN THE STATES

## Cheney shines spotlight on Iran

BY GEORGE GEDDA

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush refuses to rule out war with Iran. Iranian President Mahmoud Khatami says his country is ready to defend itself against a U.S. attack.

The United States is pushing for a peaceful solution to its nuclear impasse with Iran but, with mistrust on both sides running high, encouraging signs are hard to find.

"You look around the world at potential trouble spots, Iran is right at the top of the list," Vice President Dick Cheney said Thursday in a radio interview, hours before he and Bush were sworn in to a second term.

Asked hypothetically whether the United States would yield to Israel in a scenario in which an attack against Tehran was being

considered, he said, "One of the concerns people have is that Israel might do it without being asked, that if in fact the Israelis became convinced the Iranians had a significant nuclear capability, even the fact that Iran has a stated policy that their objective is the destruction of the state of Israel, that the Israelis might well decide to act first and let the rest of the world worry about cleaning up the diplomatic mess afterward."

"We don't want a war in the Middle East if we can avoid it," Cheney quickly added, "and certainly, in the case of the Iranian situation, I think everybody would be best suited by, or at best treated or dealt with, if we could deal with it diplomatically."

On Monday, Bush reaffirmed his support for a diplomatic settlement of Iran's nuclear program but said, "I will never take any option off the table."

Perhaps the most pessimistic comment of all this week came from Democratic Sen. Joseph Biden of Delaware.

"There may be nothing we can do to persuade Iran not to develop weapons of mass destruction," Biden said during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee confirmation hearing for Secretary of State-designate Condoleezza Rice.

Both Rice and Cheney made clear that the nuclear diplomacy the United States has been pursuing in the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency will continue.

They said the administration could raise the stakes with Iran by referring the nuclear question to the U.N. Security Council if Iran does not abide by its nonproliferation commitments.

The administration has been hopeful that a nonproliferation initiative being carried out with Iran by Germany, France and Britain will produce results.

But the administration is skeptical that Iran is bargaining in good faith. For its part, Iran says its nuclear program is aimed at producing energy, not weapons.

Khatami, traveling Thursday in Africa, seemed unconcerned about the consequences of a possible U.S. attack.

"We have prepared ourselves," he said. He added that he did not anticipate any "lunatic" military move by the United States because Washington has too many problems in Iraq.

Khatami

## N.C. storm brings chaos, snowfall to capital region

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — An inch of snow crippled North Carolina's capital and prompted plenty of finger-pointing as the city thawed from the surprise storm that caused epic gridlock and left 3,000 students stranded overnight.

A TV weatherman hung his head in shame before a local audience, calling his prediction of just a dusting "embarrassing." The governor accused local officials of putting him on hold when he called seeking to open shelters. And the mayor said the city's overall poor response was due largely to the botched forecasts.

"A forecast that had given a better indication of the likely problem would have been very helpful," Mayor Charles Meeker said as temperatures and tempers rose.

Residents — particularly those who emigrated from other parts of the country — couldn't believe the city was brought to its knees by just an inch of snow.

"I just don't think they're equipped to handle it," said Lori Jamieson.

Where's she's from in Pennsylvania, "this just doesn't happen. If they have a forecast anything is coming, they'd have those trucks sitting on the road somewhere, ready to go."

That was not the case Wednesday. When the dry snow hit already gridlocked streets at midday, it turned to ice just as schools and busi-

nesses scrambled to close early. That sent thousands of cars onto the streets before road crews and salt trucks could treat them.

Police handled more than 1,000 accidents, none fatal, and some people were caught in miles-long traffic jams that left them on the roads for more than eight hours. Buses were unable to take children home from school, stranding nearly 3,000 in their classrooms with the teachers overnight. Some motorists who couldn't get home bunched with others in office buildings and even grocery stores.

"This is embarrassing for my profession," a reporter WRAL-TV chief meteorologist Greg Fishel told viewers. "In the 24 years I've lived here, I have never encountered the traffic situation I saw today."

But he was not alone. None of the television meteorologists made the right call, evoking memories of December 2002, when they failed to predict the severity of an ice storm that plunged much of the Carolinas into darkness for more than a week.

Absent guidance to the contrary, people responded to the foul weather as they usually do in this region, shutting down early and going home. Had the city known that the roads were icing over, Meeker said, it would have advised people to stay at work and school late, as that crews could put salt on the streets before they filled with traffic.



Stranded motorists and curious onlookers wait at the scene where three vehicles slid off the road near Wake Forest, N.C., on Thursday.

## CDC shifts guidelines

SAN FRANCISCO — Health professionals applauded the government's new recommendation that rape victims and occasional intravenous drug users get emergency drug treatment to prevent the AIDS virus, describing it as "progressive" and "a safety net."

The seismic shift in policy, announced Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, says a preventative regimen of drugs should be given to anyone exposed to HIV from rape, accidents or isolated episodes of drug use or unsafe sex.

The previous recommendation, made in 1996, had been only for health care workers accidentally exposed on the job.

## Cosby investigated

LOS ANGELES — A female acquaintance of comedian Bill Cosby has made an allegation against him that has prompted a police investigation in Pennsylvania, the entertainer's attorney said Thursday.

Attorney Walter Phillips said he spoke Thursday with authorities in Pennsylvania who told him they have begun an investigation. He would not discuss the specifics of the allegation — which he called "utterly preposterous" — but said it amounts to, at the most, "inappropriate touching."

No charges have been brought against Cosby. Phillips said the accuser, who lives in Canada, knows Cosby and the alleged incident in question happened about a year ago.

## Death penalty sought

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A woman accused of strangling an expectant mother and cutting the baby from her womb pleaded not guilty Thursday, and prosecutors said they are leaning toward seeking the death penalty.

Lisa Montgomery, 36, of Melvern, Kan., did not speak during the brief hearing before a federal magistrate, who appointed another lawyer to her defense team after U.S. Attorney Todd Graves indicated he plans to seek a death sentence.

## Powell to leave FCC

WASHINGTON — Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael K. Powell, who opposed tight regulation of telecommunications but backed unprecedented fines against broadcast indecency, announced Friday he is resigning.

Powell, who has held the job for four years, said in a statement that he informed President Bush that he would depart in March.

Deputy Chairman of Secretary of State Colin Powell, said he had completed a "bold and aggressive agenda" and looked forward to spending more time with his wife and two sons.

There was no immediate word on a successor.

From The Associated Press

## Boston boosts security as FBI explores terror plot

BY SYLVIA LEE WINGFIELD

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Airport and transit authorities responded to an FBI report of a possible terrorist plot against Boston by boosting security — adding patrols, activating radar detectors and posting pictures of some of the suspects.

FBI agents were looking into an uncorroborated tip that 16 people

— 13 Chinese nationals, two Iraqi and one other person whose nationality was not released — might be planning an attack.

The agency announced

Wednesday that it was investigating four Chinese nationals, and a Transportation Security Administration official said later that a security briefing indicated the FBI also was looking for two Iraqis. The number jumped by 10 Thursday "as a result of the ongoing investigation" but did not signal that credible evidence about a plot had emerged, FBI spokesman Joe Parriss said.

The 14th person was identified on the FBI's Web site as Jose Ernesto Beltran Quinones, but his nationality was not given.

"Information is still uncorrobo-

rated and from a source of unknown reliability and motive," Parriss said.

Another federal law enforcement official in Washington, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the ongoing investigation, said the tip was received by the California Highway Patrol. The tipster claimed the four Chinese men and one woman entered the United States from Mexico and were awaiting a shipment of "nuclear oxide" that would follow them to Boston.

Several radioactive compounds

take form as oxides and could be used in a dirty bomb, said Charles Ferguson science and technology fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington. Plutonium and americium oxides, in the right amounts, would be dangerous to human health, while uranium oxide would be less so, he said.

At Logan Airport, where two of the planes were hijacked for the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the tip was being taken seriously, according to Dennis Treese, director of corporate security. The most visible sign was more patrols.



# Church burying aborted fetus' ashes

## Opponents allege political agenda behind religious disposal of remains

The Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. — A Roman Catholic church plans to bury the ashes of up to 1,000 aborted fetuses Sunday to mark the 32nd anniversary of Roe v. Wade, prompting scathing criticism from family planning groups.

Boulder Abortion Clinic director Dr. Warren Hern, who had no idea the mortuary working with his clinic had been sending ashes to Sacred Heart of Mary Church, said the decision was "a cynical exploitation of private grief for political purposes."

Chuck Myers, the director of Crist Mortuary, has an agreement with the clinic to collect and cremate tissue and had been giving the ashes to the church since 2001. Myers also delivered ashes to the parish for three years

in the mid-1990s while working as a funeral home director, said parish volunteer Susan LaVelle.

"What was going to happen to those ashes if we didn't pick them up? Would they be thrown away? I hope my words would never harm someone. My message is one of healing," LaVelle told The Denver Post in Friday's editions.

The arrangement does not violate state law, Department of Public Health spokesman Glenn Mallory said. Women who have abortions in Colorado are allowed to dispose of the fetal remains. If they choose not to, funeral homes or medical-waste facilities do so.

LaVelle said Sunday's ceremony would involve the remains of between 600 and 1,000 aborted fetuses from November 2003 through

and November 2004. She said the parish has held unannounced burials twice a year since 2001, but the parish priest agreed to make the burial public this year.

"Abortion can be a real controversial issue, but in my eyes and the eyes of people doing this in our church, we believe these babies deserve the dignity of a proper burial," LaVelle said.

Kate Horle, spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains, said most of Hern's patients have fetuses with fatal anomalies. His clinic specializes in "late abortion for fetal disorders," according to its Web site.

"These women are devastated," Horle said. "To discover that an entry is essentially taking it upon themselves to create a religious service that may not be acceptable to the family is probably really painful."

# Brain plaque removal may help fight Alzheimer's

By JIM SALTER

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Brain cells in mice recovered rapidly after brain plaques characteristic of Alzheimer's disease were removed, offering hope that plaque-clearing treatments could benefit patients with the disease, Washington University researchers said Thursday.

Results of the study will appear in the Feb. 5 issue of the Journal of Clinical Investigation.

No one knows for sure if the sticky plaque — amyloid beta peptide — is the true cause of Alzheimer's, a brain degeneration disease that eventually robs victims of memory and the ability to communicate and care for themselves.

But the plaque is a prime suspect, and several companies are developing drugs to target the buildup.

Researchers at Washington University injected mice with an antibody that cleared plaque in parts of the brain. Where the plaque was cleared, swelling on nerve cell branches disappeared quickly, the researchers said. They cautioned that while encouraging, more studies are needed to determine if similar effects might occur in people.

Removing the plaque "often led to rapid recovery of normal structure over a few days," said Dave Kleis, senior author of the study and head of the Department of Neurology at Washington University.

He said that confirmed benefits of plaque-clearing treatments and "also gets us rethinking our theories on how plaques cause nerve cell damage."

Holtzman was among scientists who previously regarded plaque damage to nerve cells as something that happened once and was irreversible. Instead, the results suggest that plaques might not just cause damage but actively maintain it, he said.

Researcher Robert Brendza said he had expected the progression of cell damage to stop once the plaque was cleared. "But what we saw was much more striking: In just three days, there were 20 to 25 percent reductions in the number or size of the existing swellings," he said.

# State law enforcement struggling to regulate Texas Hold 'Em craze

By BRIAN BAKST

The Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — David Bischoff thinks he got a raw deal last year when state gambling regulators raided his bowling alley, shut down his weekly Texas Hold 'Em poker tournament and confiscated his cards and chips.

For months afterward, the threat of criminal charges hung over Bischoff — and his card tables sat vacant — until prosecutors concluded that Minnesota's laws against poker were too vague to enforce.

Minnesota is now one of several states where legislators are looking to clarify laws dealing with card games at a time when poker is becoming an all-out craze.

"These are just people who have been watching poker on TV and

they want to come out and play and be like the people on TV," said Bischoff, whose tournaments are up and running again. "It's not about spending money and winning money. It's just about the competition and seeing who can be the best."

The most popular game is Texas Hold 'Em, in which players are dealt two cards each and can use five community cards flipped over in the middle of the table to make the best hand. Players can risk everything on a single turn of a card. As the popularity of the game has grown, so have problems for gambling regulators.

In Iowa, a couple of American Legion posts heeded warnings and halted their regular tournaments rather than jeopardize their charitable gaming licenses.

Minnesota law allows card tour-

naments at bars and businesses as long as the hosts do not directly profit from the play and players do not gamble with real money. Bischoff said he complied by charging no entry fees and limiting awards to hats and T-shirts.

His situation drew the attention of state Sen. Dave Kleis, who this month introduced legislation that would define Texas Hold 'Em as a "social skill game" and lump it with card games like cribbage and rummy — games in which players are allowed to win money in tournaments. Kleis' bill would explicitly permit poker tournaments as long as the prizes do not exceed \$200.

"It's no different than cribbage, 500, euchre or bridge. Those are played all over the state, whether it be in nursing homes, restaurants or bars," Kleis said. "Why don't you raid the nursing home for playing cribbage and bridge?"



Minnesota Sen. Dave Kleis, R-St. Cloud, top left, joins Granite Bowl owner David Bischoff, top right, in St. Paul last week to unveil legislation to permit Texas Hold 'Em privately organized tournaments.

# Lockdown on cold meds cracks down on meth labs

By KELLY KURT

The Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. — After years of locking up methamphetamine makers only to see illegal drug labs multiply on urban storefronts and country roads, Oklahoma got tough.

It locked up the meth makers' cold medicine.

The state banned over-the-counter sales of Sudafed and other decongestants used to produce meth, and ordered that the medicines be placed behind pharmacy counters. Ten months later, meth lab seizures in Oklahoma are down more than 80 percent.

State officials believe many clandestine

cooks have closed their kitchens because of the crackdown on pseudoephedrine.

"To see the sort of diminution we've seen, there is absolutely no other reason," said Lonnie Wright, who heads Oklahoma's drug agency.

Now, other states are looking to lock up their pseudoephedrine, too.

Oklahoma and several other states have limited the amount of pseudoephedrine customers can buy at one time, but Oklahoma went further by requiring that the drug be dispensed by a pharmacist.

Customers do not need a prescription for pseudoephedrine, but they have to produce ID and sign for the drug.

Oklahoma averaged 105 meth lab busts a month before the law took effect last April. By November, the number had dropped to 19.

Those numbers persuaded Missouri Attorney General Jay Nixon to push for a similar measure there.

In Oklahoma, pseudoephedrine can no longer be sold in groceries and convenience stores. The law applies only to pills containing pseudoephedrine. Gel and liquid forms, which normally are not used to make meth, still are available over the counter.

Some people grumble when told they will have to show ID, said Jim Brown, owner of Freeland-Brown Pharmacy in Tulsa.

"But when you tell them why," he said, "they really don't object."



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## INAUGURATION

## President officially begins second term

BY JENNIFER LOVEN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush set forth Friday on an ambitious second-term agenda of sparking democracy in the Middle East and reshaping state pension plans after wrapping up his inaugural with moments of prayer and reflection.

His Republican allies said they were eager to begin, as well, while Democrats vowed to resume their fight against "extreme" Republican policies.

Four days of celebrations surrounding Bush's inauguration culminated with a National Prayer Service on Friday, following a tradition set by the nation's first chief executive, George Washington.

The hour-long service, Bush's second visit to the church in two days, brought together 3,200 invited family, Cabinet members, top White House aides and others in the majestic Gothic-style sanctuary of the National Cathedral.

Instrumental and choral music filled the church and an interfaith lineup of Christian and Jewish clergy helped celebrate through prayer the events of the day before — Bush's swearing-in at the



Former President George H.W. Bush, left, gives a thumbs up following a musical performance during the inaugural prayer service with, from second left, former first lady Barbara Bush, President Bush, first lady Laura Bush and daughter Jenna Bush at Washington's National Cathedral on Friday.

Capitol. The president, who did not speak, was met with anti-war and anti-abortion protesters on his route to and from the cathedral.

Offering one prayer, the Rev. Billy Graham said he believed God had a hand in Bush's re-election.

"Their next four years are hidden from us, but they are not hidden from you," said the 86-year-old evangelist, whom Bush credits with inspiring him

to reaffirm his faith and give up drinking at age 40. "You know the challenges and opportunities they will face. Give them a clear mind, a warm heart, calmness in the midst of turmoil, reassurance in times of discouragement and your presence always."

On Thursday, the president was on the go all day, from an early morning church appearance to the inaugural ceremony to watching the traditional parade down Pennsylvania Avenue to a late

night dash through nine black-tie inaugural balls. The only thing on the president's public schedule for the first day of his second term was the prayer service.

For the immediate future, Bush's list of most-pressing duties include naming someone to the powerful new post of director of national intelligence, watching the Jan. 30 elections in Iraq and mending still-frayed relations with Europe during his first overseas trip of his second term.

## ANALYSIS

## New Bush agenda is wildly ambitious

BY DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — In his brief but eloquent inaugural address, President Bush dedicated the balance of his time in office to the same sweeping goals he set forth at the start of his first term — the worldwide realization of the ideals of freedom and democracy.

Four years ago, speaking from the same Capitol steps to a nation which had barely elected him and an international audience that barely knew him, he said, "Through much of the last century, America's faith in freedom and democracy was a rock in a raging sea. Now it is a seed upon the wind, taking root in many nations."

On this cold, clear Jan. 20, as a president tested by war and terrorism and renewed in power, Bush pledged to seek "the greatest achievements in the history of freedom," the liberation of oppressed people everywhere and the end of all tyrannies.

If that seems a wildly ambitious agenda for a country whose citizens are increasingly discomfited by the unfinished effort to liberate one country — Iraq — it is.

But it reflects one essential truth we have learned about Bush: His faith that the quest for freedom is a universal truth, rooted in human nature and intended by God.

He reached out to Lincoln for his language and his metaphors, paraphrasing one of the Great Emancipator's famous phrases and saying that "no one is fit to be a master and no one deserves to be a slave."

But in the sweep of his ambitions to make the United States the driving force for democratization of the world, he resembles no president as much as the idealistic Woodrow Wilson.

In interviews this month with Bush's White House associates, I found near-universal rejection of the notion that second terms are fated to bring disappointment. When I cited the historians' litany of scandals and mishaps that befell Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon, Reagan and Clinton after their second oath-taking, Karl Rove and others rejected any notion of inevitability.

But it is Wilson — who saw his dream of permanent peace embodied in the League of Nations crushed literally after he was re-elected in 1916 — who might embody the cautionary message for Bush.

## For some, Bush spoke to 'who we are as Americans'

BY ANGIE WAGNER

The Associated Press

The luncheon crowd at the Boston Beaneys was noisy — more interested in the specials than the Washington spectacle — and Timothy Taft strained to hear President Bush's inaugural speech.

"It was just what I expected," Taft, a 39-year-old maintenance manager, said from the restaurant in Morgantown, W.Va. "He showed strength."

The message was of hope, freedom and the need to overcome tyranny. Las Vegas tourist Mary

Jane Fincher, a real estate appraiser from Fox River Grove, Ill., found it passionate and full of purpose.

"It's a speech of really who we are as Americans," said Fincher, 58.

Bush spoke for 21 minutes, about the work needed to protect America and of a world moving toward liberty. He mentioned overseas Social Security and spoke in sweeping terms about keeping the world safe. Not once did he mention Iraq or Afghanistan.

"It seems to me that he's laying ground for Iran and North

Korea," said retired Las Vegas French teacher Linda Cotten, 59.

Cotten, a Democrat, found the speech alarming.

Not Mark Owens, a 46-year-old Army veteran who watched the address inside a dim American Legion hall in Tampa, Fla. "What he said was fine," Owens said. "It was what he didn't say — how soon we are going to get out of Iraq."

But Joe Echeverria, a 62-year-old Air Force veteran and Republican, was impressed. He liked how concise Bush was and that he didn't make empty promises.

"All right, Bush!" he said to the television above the bar.

Democrat and Navy veteran Herbie Hope, 70, had hoped to hear Bush say something about veterans. Jim Swafford, 62, of Nashville, Tenn., wanted to hear more about plans for Social Security — and after starting to watch the speech, he turned off the television.

"He's trying to take my Social Security away from me, and he's lying about it," said Swafford, a semiretired owner of a hair salon. "I don't like to listen to him anymore than I have to to find out what he's trying to take away from me. I miss Bill Clinton."

## Bushes delight partygoers

WASHINGTON — President Bush and his wife Laura, dancing to the delight of partygoers, joined jubilant supporters Thursday night at lavish balls that capped the week's celebration of his second inauguration.

The first couple opened the evening at the Constitution Ball, entering the hall to roars of enthusiasm. Then after a brief whirl around the stage to the strains of "I Could Have Danced All Night," they whisked away for a night of appearances around the capital.

There were eight other official inaugural balls with every state represented. On a cold evening, about 50,000 people attended the black-tie parties at Union Station, the National Building Museum, the Washington Hilton and the Washington Convention Center.

"I love my wife," the president joked at the Constitution Ball. "I'm looking forward to dancing with her maybe for the first time in four years.... We're having the time of our lives."

The Commander-in-Chief Ball, which honored the military and their families, was free, but the other balls each cost \$150 a ticket.



President Bush, flashing the Longhorn

## Norwegians confused by 'salute'

OSLO, Norway — A hand gesture by President Bush was lost in translation in Norway, where many viewers watching his inauguration thought it was a salute to the devil.

But in reality, it was just a sign of respect for the University of Texas Longhorns, whose fans are known to shout out "Hook 'em, horns!" at athletic events.

The president and family were photographed lifting their right hands with their index and pinky fingers raised up, much like a pair of horns during Thursday's inaugural.

## Thousands protest, hold vigils

SAN FRANCISCO — Thousands of people in dozens of cities across the nation walked out of work and school, held mock coronations, intoned the names of the Iraq war dead and held candlelight vigils to show their disapproval of President Bush as he was sworn in for his second term.

From Massachusetts to San Francisco, the protesters carried a similar message Thursday, declaring the war in Iraq, angry about the Patriot Act and concerned about the next four years.

"The administration thinks it's got a mandate to continue its policies," said David Williams, a 49-year-old construction company owner from Oakland, California, who wore a T-shirt to the San Francisco march with Bush's picture and the description, "International Terrorism."

"This is my way of saying, 'I don't think so.' The Bush administration has no respect for human rights outside the United States and they have no respect for people anywhere else in the world," he said.

From wire reports

## IN THE WORLD

## EU court swears in commissioner

BY ROBERT WIELAARD

The Associated Press

LUXEMBOURG — The European Commission was sworn into office Friday at a ceremony in which the EU's top 25 executives pledged to further the cause of European integration in their five-year terms and not be swayed by political pressure from home.

The ceremony came two months after European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso finally got his team approved by the European Parliament after the EU assembly rejected some of his original choices.

Barroso initially proposed

Rocco Buttiglione, a conservative Italian Roman Catholic, as EU justice commissioner.

But the EU assembly rejected him for calling homosexuality "a sin" in his October confirmation hearing. He was replaced by with former Italian foreign minister Franco Frattini.

In their oath of office before the European Court of Justice, 25 EU commissioners — one from each EU state — promised not to favor their countries, but work for the common good of the Union.

The commission is the EU's driving force and executive body. It drafts EU laws, oversees their implementation and ensures the free movement of goods, services,

capital and people across the union.

Over the years, it has been given a greater role in steering economic policies and Barroso — formerly prime minister of Portugal — has given key posts to reform-minded figures aiming to revive Europe's sluggish economic growth.

A key assignment for the Barroso team is to generate jobs and growth and allay public fears about globalization, outsourcing and liberalization.

The 25 commissioners pledged to work "in the general interest" of the EU and vowed "neither to seek, nor to take instructions from any government or from any other body." They also prom-

ised to "behave with integrity and discretion" in accepting job offers or benefits after leaving the EU in late 2009.

Each commissioner made that pledge in his or her language. There are 20 official languages in the EU.

Wary of public skepticism facing the Brussels "euro-judge," Barroso created a new job — an EU commissioner in charge of communication strategy. It went to Margot Wallström, a Swede who served as EU environment commissioner for the past five years.

It will be her job to generate public support for the EU constitution that should be ratified in 25 states by the end of 2006, but faces tough referendum challenges in about a dozen member nations.



Viktor Yushchenko

## Ukraine prepares for new president

BY YURAS KARMANAU

The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Organizers of the tent camp in downtown Kiev that became an enduring symbol of the "Orange Revolution" began dismantling it Friday ahead of Viktor Yushchenko's inauguration as president.

"By tonight, all the tents will be taken away," said Alexei Lomtsev, the head of the camp's security operation. "We didn't want to interfere with the inauguration."

Yushchenko supporters put up the tent camp within hours of the Nov. 21 election in which the Western-leaning reformer was declared the winner. In the height of protests, thousands packed the site, decked out in Yushchenko's campaign color, orange, and demanding the results be overturned.

The Supreme Court later did so, ruling the election was tainted by massive fraud, and Yushchenko won the Dec. 26 rerun. He is to be inaugurated Sunday.

Also Friday, Yushchenko met with the European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana, underlining his aim to bring Ukraine into closer cooperation with the West.

Solana said Ukraine had great potential and that the EU wants to improve relations with Kiev.

"Rest assured we will be with you, we will accompany you in this beautiful journey to your future, to progress and stability," he told reporters.

The scheduling of the inauguration was finalized only on Thursday, after Yushchenko cleared a Supreme Court challenge filed by his opponent, Viktor Yanukovich.

Ukrainian officials were putting together the ceremony on short notice, with delegations from at least 33 countries. Among those expected to attend are outgoing Secretary of State Colin Powell, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski.



Ademilton, a 16.11-pound baby boy, was born Tuesday at the Albert Sabrin Maternity Hospital in Salvador, Brazil. Francisca Ramos dos Santos, 38, gave birth to the healthy boy by Caesarean section.

## Brazilian woman gives birth to 16-pound, 11-ounce baby

The Associated Press

SAO PAULO, Brazil — A 38-year-old woman in northeastern Brazil has given birth to a son weighing more than 16 pounds, hospital officials said.

Francisca Ramos dos Santos delivered 16 pound, 11-ounce Ademilton on Tuesday at the Albert Sabrin Maternity Hospital in Salvador, 900 miles northeast of Sao Paulo, said hospital director Rita Leal.

"It is the biggest baby ever born in the hospital's 12-year his-

tory, and I think it could very well be one of the biggest ever born in this country," Leal said in a telephone interview.

She said Caesarean section was performed because both mother and baby were doing well.

Leal said Santos was a diabetic and that "it is common for women with diabetes to give birth to large babies."

The child was Santos' fifth and heaviest, Leal said. Her four other children — now between 9 and 15 years old — ranged in weight from seven to 11 pounds at birth.

meet with Hamas leaders later Friday, the second session in three days.

## Blessing the lambs

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II on Friday blessed two lambs whose wool will be sheared to make a band for newly appointed archbishops.

New archbishops receive the pallium, a band of white wool decorated with black crosses that is a sign of pastoral authority and a symbol of their bond with the pope, on June 29.

From The Associated Press

## North Korea calls U.S. 'wrecker of democracy'

BY SANG-HUN CHOE

The Associated Press

SEOUL — North Korea called the United States a destroyer of democracies, as South Korean experts predicted that President Bush's second inauguration speech presages a tougher road ahead for the isolated totalitarian country.

Bush embarked on his second term early Friday Korean time, vowing that his new administration would not shrink from the great objective of ending "tyranny" around the globe.

Bush didn't cite North Korea by name, but earlier this week, his secretary of state-designate, Condoleezza Rice, labeled several nations including Iran, Zimbabwe and North Korea as "outposts of tyranny."

Such comments came shortly after North Korea told a visiting U.S. congressional delegation that it would return to nuclear disarmament talks and treat Washington as a "friend," as long as the United States does not "slander" its totalitarian regime.

Isolated over its nuclear weapons pursuit and burdened by a chronic economic debacle, North Korea has cited what it calls a U.S. attempt to topple its government as a key threat to its survival and the biggest obstacle to ending the nuclear dispute.

"The U.S. is a wrecker of democracy as it ruthlessly infringes upon the sovereignty of other countries and human rights for their peoples for the mere reason that they are different from it in ideology, system and religious belief," said the North's official news agency, KCNA.

The commentary, which was released late Thursday in response to a report by Human Rights Watch, came hours before Bush's inauguration speech. Pyongyang has yet to formally react to the speech.

KCNA said the United States has no rights to judge human rights, calling it a "cessation of crimes," "the graveyard of

human rights," and "the worst human rights abuses in the world."

Private analysts said the Bush speech contained a tough warning to North Korea.

"The hidden message is that if North Korea doesn't resolve its nuclear problem, the United States is willing to attempt a toppling and changing leaderships in North Korea,"

said Park June-yung, a political scientist at Seoul's Ewha Woman's University.

Ko Yoo-hwan, a North Korea expert in Seoul's Dongguk University, said Bush's inauguration speech signals a switch in U.S. foreign policy from a "hard-power" approach of war on terror to a proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to a "soft-power" pressure focusing on spreading democracy, freedom and human rights.

"The problem with North Korea is that it confronts the United States in both issues: WMD and human rights," Ko said. "Pyongyang could expect prolonged, tough negotiations ahead."

"Until now, the United States has not really focused on the issues of democracy and freedom and human rights in North Korea. These are not matters you can resolve overnight," he added.

## Steps toward a truce

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Thousands of armed Palestinian police took up positions in the northern Gaza Strip on Friday to prevent attacks on Israel, and Islamic militants said they were suspending rocket fire — two major steps toward a possible truce.

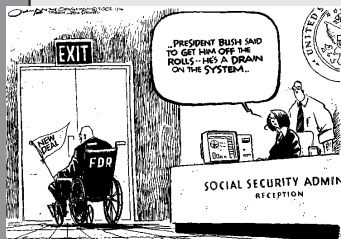
The Palestinian deployment, a result of renewed Israeli-Palestinian security coordination, came as Hamas reported progress in talks with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas on a cease-fire deal. Abbas was to





# Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



JACK OHMAN/Tribune Media Services



WALT HANDELSMAN/Tribune Media Services



WALT HANDELSMAN/Tribune Media Services



MIKE PETERS/King Features Syndicate



WALT HANDELSMAN/Tribune Media Services

# Tsunami aid groups: U.S. still needed

By LELY T. DJUHARI  
The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Aid groups warned on Friday it might be too soon for the U.S. military to scale back its emergency operations for Asia's tsunami victims, while an informal cease-fire between Indonesian troops and rebels appeared to have collapsed, threatening to derail relief efforts.

Following a U.S. announcement on Thursday that American forces would begin immediately transferring responsibility for relief operations to the "appropriate host nations and international organizations," some aid groups expressed concern that the move came too quickly, as tens of thousands of survivors from the Dec. 26 tsunami that struck a dozen nations were still in need of food aid and shelter.

Tallies of the dead from the disaster have varied widely, from about 158,000 to 221,000. "My gut feeling is that no, the civilian side isn't ready to take over," said Aine Fay, Indonesia director for the Irish aid group Concern. "The American military, the military hardware has been so useful." "I'm a bit taken aback that they're thinking of withdrawing already," she said.

Speaking in Bangkok, Thailand, the U.N. special coordinator for tsunami relief, Margareta Wahlstrom, said she hoped the military would not leave immediately because the relief operations depend on its "resources and machinery."

She added, however, that "in a number of weeks to a month the military will be able to phase out and [the operation] be supported by an entirely civilian infrastructure."

More than 11,000 U.S. Navy, Marines, Army, Air Force and Coast Guard personnel backed by 16 U.S. Navy ships are currently involved in providing relief support in the tsunami's aftermath, according to the U.S. Defense Department. Since the operation began, they have delivered more than 8,600 tons of relief supplies to the affected region.

Indonesian officials said last week that all foreign troops should be out of their country by March 26, but they later backed away from that deadline. On Friday, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono reiterated that the date was not hard and fast.

Meanwhile, Indonesia's military confirmed Friday that it had killed 120 suspected rebels who were involved in relief efforts in the country's worst-hit Aceh province.

"They are the ones who are trying to disrupt aid work," Indonesian military chief Gen. Endriatono Susanto said in an interview.

"We cannot allow that to happen," he added. "We have to be able to guarantee that aid workers — for foreigners and Indonesians — are safe to do their work."



JOHN HAYNES/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

**Airman 1st Class Amy Killingbeck, medical technician with the 35th Medical Operations Squadron, Misawa Air Base, Japan, discusses an issue last week with Master Sgt. Daniel Elliott, an international health specialist from Detachment 2, 13th Air Force, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. Both airmen are deployed to Utagua Air Base, Thailand, in support of Operation Unified Assistance.**

Separatist rebels and troops in Aceh have been fighting for nearly three decades. Both sides agreed to an informal cease-fire in the aftermath of the tsunami to allow distribution of aid and reassure the thousands of international relief workers there, but the truce now appears under threat.

Rebel spokesman Tengku Jamaica said around 20 guerrillas had been killed, and the 100 others referred to by the military chief were unarmed civilians. He denied that the rebels were targeting aid convoys, and accused the military of abandoning the informal cease-fire.

In Sri Lanka, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jan Petersen, in his role as peace broker between the government and Tamil Tiger rebels, held "very constructive" talks Friday with President Chandrika Kumaratunga, presidential spokesman Harin Peris said.

Petersen said a number of envoys were trying to end disputes between the Tamil Tigers and government troops over distribution of aid to tsunami victims. Each side accuses the other of obstructing deliveries in eastern Sri Lanka, where lines of control between the two sides are unclear.



VAL GEMPS/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

**An HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter from the 33rd Rescue Squadron, Kadana Air Base, Japan, is loaded inside a C-5 Galaxy cargo aircraft during Operation Unified Assistance in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Thursday. Kadana helicopter crews, maintenance personnel and crewmembers are either back or on their way back to their home station after helping deliver relief goods to tsunami victims here in Sri Lanka.**

## U.N. finalizes disaster pact

By KENJI HALL  
The Associated Press

KOBE, Japan — Delegates at a U.N. conference on disasters worked late into the night Friday to finalize a blueprint for preventing natural calamities from causing death and destruction but weren't expected to set any long-term targets.

The five-day meeting in Kobe had been reorganized to focus on funding and laying the groundwork for a tsunami warning system for southern Asia, following the Dec. 26 earthquake and killer waves that hammered the Asian and African coasts.

John Horekens, the U.N. conference coordinator, said delegates were in "general consensus" over the 10-year action plan.

The "framework for action," which calls on nations to share technology and draw up their own evacuation strategies and hazard maps, won't be legally binding or set targets. Officials

from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies had called for concrete goals.

Even so, Horekens praised the plan.

"The world today has the means to protect communities," he told a news conference.

Since the U.N. conference began on Tuesday, the document has been at the center of a dispute over whether discussions on disasters should also encompass climate change.

The 25-nation European Union has backed poor island nations threatened by storms and rising ocean waters in proposing a draft that cited climate change as a factor in natural disasters and called for officials to identify "climate-related disaster risks."

But Mark Lagon, deputy U.S. delegation head, said he had opposed that because preventing disasters, not climate science, was the central issue — a view supported by Australia and Canada.

Still, he said he had compromised to allow a few references to climate change.

"I wouldn't call the talks rancorous, but I'd say they have gone round in circles," Logan said in an interview.

The dispute reflects a long-standing battle over the Kyoto Protocol, a U.N. pact drawn up in 1997 to combat climate change by reducing carbon-dioxide and other heat-trapping emissions worldwide.

Wealthy nations pledged at least US\$8 million (Thursday) to begin work on an estimated US\$30 million (early warning network for the Indian Ocean. A tsunami network in the Pacific, set up in 1965, now protects some 26 nations.

Officials have agreed on the merits of an Indian Ocean system, which could have allowed coastal residents to flee to safety had it been in place last month. Many support setting up a network that also monitors the Mediterranean, Caribbean and other parts of the globe.

## Aid groups overlooking some tsunami victims

By EDWARD HARRIS  
The Associated Press

**LHOKSEUMAWE, Indonesia** — Abdul Hafid holds a nearly empty begging bowl at his improvised roadblock, demanding money from trucks ferrying food, medicine and other relief supplies toward western Aceh, the region that suffered the worst damage in the tsunami.

The western coast of Indonesia's Sumatra island took the full force of the Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunami. But Hafid, 13, and the few aid workers in the province's east say the humanitarian effort is overlooking the other side of the island.

"We're suffering, too," Hafid said at one of a dozen beggar-manned checkpoints on the 150-mile-long route between the provincial capital of Banda Aceh and the region's second city, Lhokseumawe. "The help we're getting is not enough."

While the tsunami rushed deep

inland along the western beaches, the bow-shaped island's northern tip refracted the high waters, residents say. The wave swept down the eastern shore at an oblique angle, washing only 500 yards onto shore.

But life here was centered on the sea's edge, since mist-shrouded mountains rise up only miles from the coast. Whole villages are missing, replaced by dozens of government-run tent cities housing tens of thousands of survivors.

Still, with so much destruction in Banda Aceh — and government restrictions on the travel of aid groups — fewer relief workers have ventured here.

"My impression is that this side is less taken care of," said Tse Tsz Wah, of the French medical aid group Doctors Without Borders.

Survivors on the east coast suffer from diarrhea, infected wounds, and illnesses such as malaria, Tse said.

"Most of the injuries here are from the earthquake," Tse said.



Members of Cuba's Volunimous Dance group rehearse for an upcoming performance in Havana on Jan. 11. From left foreground: Kiomara Nidia Gonzalez, 41; Kenia Caceres, 23; and Barbara Paula Valdes, 27.

## Elegant and overweight

Cuban dancers delight audiences, defeat stereotypes

BY ANNE-MARIE GARCIA

The Associated Press

HAVANA — Cuban ballet dancers in white glide across the floor, executing an airy blend of pirouettes and back stretches.

Within seconds, spectators are captivated, quickly forgetting what at first they couldn't overlook — most of the dancers weigh more than 200 pounds.

Six dancers between the ages of 23 and 41 make up the island's Volunimous Dance group, which has presented about 20 works and is preparing its current show, "Una muerte dulce," or "A Sweet Death," for the spring.

"It's incredible how they utilize their roundness," Mirta Castro, a tourist from Costa Rica, said as she watched the dancers rehearsing in Havana. "It breaks free of the belief that dance is only for slender people."

That is exactly the taboo Juan Miguel Mas, the group's director, wanted to shatter when he created Volunimous Dance in 1996. He called together dozens of overweight people in Havana to a formal dance audition where he looked for inner spark, eagerness and motivation.

"We these people also need to express ourselves with our bodies," said Mas, who is also a dancer in the group. "We feel [our bodies], we command them and we enjoy them just like any other human being."

Mas, who weighs more than 300 pounds, first appeared on stage with Cuba's Contemporary Dance troupe as a giant baby in the lead role of a 1989 production called "Absurdo," or "Absurd." He is the only member of Volunimous Dance, or Danza Volunimosa, who danced professionally before the group's creation.

Dancers in the group have come and gone over the years, Mas said. Money is scarce, and as an independent project, the group often scrambles to find rehearsal space and generate interest in their performances.

The group is not officially recognized by Cuba's cultural ministry, so none of the dancers receive full salaries from the socialist state; instead, they earn some money for each contract.

Mas said he thinks the reason there's been no formal endorsement for the group is that most of the dancers have not received dance training from the state.

"We desperately need support," said Mas, who added the group is the only one of its kind in Cuba and, he believes, in the region.

Barbara Paula Valdes, 27, said she feels transformed after two years with Volunimous Dance.

"I changed how I walk, how I talk, the way I relate to people," said Valdes, who weighs 275 pounds. "I had an artist hidden inside me and didn't realize it."

## Irish drivers adjust to new speed limits

BY SHAWN POGATCHNIK

The Associated Press

DUBLIN, Ireland — Speed limits on Ireland's roads switched from miles to kilometers Thursday, a potentially confusing change that road-safety officials said went smoothly at morning rush hour.

The nationwide change meant taking down 35,000 signs in miles and erecting 58,000 new ones in kilometers. Speed limits also went up slightly in cities and on the country's busiest roads, but were cut significantly on the vast majority of narrow country roads.

Ireland's most dangerous and poorly policed.

The new limit on top-quality motorways is 120kph (75mph), up from 70mph (113kph). These are also the roads where police enforce the limit most rigorously. By contrast, the limit on most country roads is now 80kph (50mph), down from 60mph (37kph).

For many drivers, simply finding the new limits on their car speedometers will be difficult; the vast majority of speedometers here list miles in big print, with smaller numbers for kilometers.

But Conor Faughan, a spokesman for AA Roadwatch, which monitors traffic problems in Ireland, said the morning commute was "going very smoothly."

He said the government's information campaign — which involved numerous ads on TV, radio and newspapers and included a mass leafleting of 1.6 million homes — "has been so comprehensive as to reach saturation point. I doubt there's a motorist out there who hasn't heard the message."

He said people who couldn't read the small-print kilometer markings on their speedometers would find the transition "slightly awkward. We'll just have to get used to it."

## Kasparov withdraws from world championship

MOSCOW — Chess master Garry Kasparov says he is withdrawing from a FIDE world championship match that had been scheduled this spring because he has suffered financial and psychological damage from the match's repeated postponement, his office said Wednesday.

In a statement published Tuesday on the Chessbase News site, Kasparov said he had alerted the World Chess Federation, known by its French acronym FIDE, on Monday that he would not take part in the World Chess Championship in Istanbul.

The competition was to be a so-called "unification match" between Kasparov, who broke away from FIDE in 1993, and FIDE champion Rustam Kasimdzhanov of Uzbekistan.

## Prehuman remains said to be 4.5M years old

DENVER, Colo. — Paleontologists working in Ethiopia have discovered the remains of at least nine primitive human ancestors that are up to 4.5 million years old.

The specimens belong to a hominid species called *Ardipithecus ramidus*, a transitional creature with significant ape characteristics. The fossils are mostly teeth and jaw fragments, with some hands and feet bones, according to nine researchers from universities in the United States and Spain.

The discoveries were made over a four-year span beginning in 1999 in digs at the As Duna site in Ethiopia's Afar region, which has yielded many important fossils. The details appear in the latest issue of the journal *Nature*.

## Italy uses hawks to preserve ancient ruins

ROME — Officials at the Herculeanum archaeological site began using hawks Wednesday to protect the ancient ruins — once buried by lava and hot ash — from pigeons.

Herculeanum is home to a large community of pigeons that has nested at the site, officials say, and the acidity of bird droppings has damaged ancient buildings and decorations.

The pigeons have also pecked at burnt wooden fixtures at the archaeological site, putting their survival at risk, officials responsible for preserving and restoring the site said in a statement.

They said the idea came from the hawks used to keep pigeons from Italian airports, and that three hawks will be set to work at the site each day.

The town of Herculeanum, which lies just south of Naples, was buried in 79 A.D. by the same eruption of Vesuvius that covered neighboring Pompeii.

## Free beer will cost Czech man dearly

PRAGUE, Czech Republic — It will be the most expensive keg of beer he's ever had.

A 32-year-old Czech man got himself locked up in a pizzeria in the town of Brno late Wednesday to have free access to beer overnight. When the restaurant's staff left, he broke into a cooling box containing a keg, disconnected the pipes leading to the tap, put them in his mouth and drank as much as he could.

The man, drunk and fast asleep, was found by cleaners in the early hours of Thursday.

Police spokesman Vit Cvrcek said he will now have to pay for the beer he drank and faces up to one year in prison or a fine of \$346.

From The Associated Press



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[www.strips.com](http://www.strips.com) beginning 11 Feb

Deadline for messages 27 Jan 05, Drawing on 14 Feb 05

\*No purchase necessary to win.



## Guards decry policies

**CA** RIVERSIDE — Prison guards claim state officials lied to the U.S. Supreme Court about racial segregation in California's prisons and the extent to which race is used to set prison policies, a newspaper reported Wednesday.

Correctional officers and inmates told The Press-Enterprise of Riverside that segregation is rampant throughout the system, despite state attorneys' contention that it is limited to inmates' first 60 days behind bars.

"There is no way I'd put a white and a black together," said Charles Hughes, a lieutenant at California State Prison in Lancaster. "I'd be putting my job on the line if I did that."

The newspaper reported that one correctional officer filed a whistleblower complaint with the state auditor last month, saying the state presented false arguments to the high court in November in a lawsuit filed by inmate Garrison Johnson, who claimed his right to equal protection under the law was violated by the prison system's racial segregation policies.

## Handstand turns fatal

**FL** NORTH FORT MYERS — A woman fell to her death while trying to do a handstand on the railing of a second-floor hotel balcony, sheriff's officials said.

Molly Herman, 23, died Sunday. While attempting a handstand, she toppled over and dropped to the hotel patio, according to the Lee County sheriff's department.

Just before she fell, she had called out to a friend, "Watch to see what I can still do," a police report said.

Foul play is not believed to be involved, officials said.

## Woman killed over \$20

**HI** LIHUE — A Kauai man fatally stabbed an 18-year-old woman after an argument over \$20, according to a confession on file with police.

Richard Costa told police he stabbed Westlyn Jerves in the neck after arguing in his car over money she owed him. The Garden Island reported in Wednesday's edition, Costa told police that he then drove over her body as he fled a Port Allen parking lot, the newspaper said.

Costa, 36, of Kalaheo, was charged Wednesday with second-degree murder in the slaying of Jerves of Hanalei, said Richard Minatoya, first deputy prosecutor.

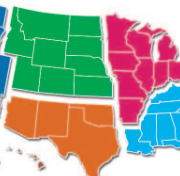
Costa told police that after the stabbing, he tossed Jerves to the ground and threw the knife in the ocean.

Costa told police that he ran over something as he pulled out of the dirt parking lot near the Japanese graveyard near Glass Beach, but didn't realize until later than it was Jerves' body. The Garden Island reported.

## Tag fight goes to court

**VT** RUTLAND — A Rutland inmate is suing the state for denying his request for a religious license plate.

The Department of Motor Vehicles rejected Shawn Byrne's appli-



## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

cation for a vanity license plate, "JOHN316," which refers to a scripture passage in the Bible.

Byrne filed suit in federal court Wednesday. "This is a violation of his free expression rights," said Joshua Carden, an attorney for the Arizona-based Alliance Defense Fund.

Byrne was asked to list three choices for his vanity plate. Byrne wrote, "JOHN316," "JN316" and "JN36TN." The application also asked Byrne what each selection represented, and in each case he wrote, "Bible passage."

The DMV denied all three requests. "It has been deemed to be a combination that refers to deity and has been denied based on that reason," it said in a letter.

## Bill targets keggers

**TX** AUSTIN — Texans purchasing beer kegs would be required to register with the state, swearing they are 21 years old and promising not to serve minors, under a new bill filed this week in the Texas House.

Retailers on Wednesday criticized the bill, contending the burden of the proposed registration program and its bookkeeping would fall on them.

However, the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, which would administer the registration, supports the measure, said Roy Hale, program specialist for the commission's enforcement division.

Rep. Rob Eissler filed the bill,



## Learning the ropes

Marlise Thomas, a fifth-grader at Johnson School of the Arts in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, practices juggling with three scarves during a circus workshop with the Bindlestiff Family Circus in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

one of three designed to reduce underage drinking. Eissler, R-Texas, supported the legislation at the urging of a constituent. Susan Wagener's son died of acute alcohol poisoning in 1999 on the campus of Texas A&M University.

Retailers contend the proposed registration requirements are largely redundant because some businesses already register kegs voluntarily.

## Jelly bean heaven

**IN** WAKARUSA — When the owners of The Dime Store opened candy, they're not messing around.

This year, they ordered 30 tons of jumbo jelly beans.

The Wakarusa store ordered the tonnage for its 35th bean season — far more than the 5 tons of the candies it ordered in 1998.

The store in the town about 25 miles southeast of South Bend began selling jumbo jelly beans in conjunction with the Wakarusa Maple Syrup Festival 35 years ago. That first year, the store ordered 100 pounds and sold them all.

"When we first started selling jelly beans by the ton, people probably thought we had rocks in our head," store co-owner Deb McNally said last week.

This year, the store is featuring stone-shaped jelly beans, along with its popular "Love Potion Number Nine," a cherry-vanilla jumbo bean mix.

## Missing children found

**VA** GALAXY — Two young children whose parents allegedly kidnapped them at gunpoint from a foster home in North Carolina were found safe Wednesday in southwestern Virginia, police said.

An Amber Alert had been issued Saturday for James Paul Chambers, 12, and his sister, Breanna, 11 months. They had been put in foster care last year after a drug raid at the family home.

The children were found in a mobile home area near the North Carolina and Tennessee lines, said Grayson County Sheriff Jerry Wilson. The parents and two other people were taken into custody at the scene, Wilson said.

North Carolina authorities said the children were taken from a foster home in Watauga County, N.C., early Saturday by their father, James Lee Canter, 28, and their mother, Alisha Chambers, 18.

## Project to study bison

**MT** BILLINGS — Wildlife officials plan to capture 100 bison calves that leave Yellowstone National Park in the coming months and use them to test an experimental quarantine facility just outside the park.

The pilot project will look at whether a quarantine facility could be helpful in finding bison free of the disease to help start herds in Montana and other states.

"Our view is that if we are going to restore bison to the landscape in some broader way, we're going to have to take some real active steps," said Pat Flowers, a regional supervisor for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

But bison defenders, such as Mike Mease of the Buffalo Field Campaign, say the facility will serve to treat the bison like cattle.



## Squid beaching

Newport Beach lifeguard officer John Moore checks out some of the estimated 500 giant squid that washed up along Newport Beach, Calif.



## In a derby daze

Cub Scouts Greg LaRock, 8, left, and Patrick Collins, 7, watch as their Pinewood Derby cars are placed on the racetrack for their next race at Berrendo Elementary School in Roswell, N.M.



## Oil spill mystery

Volunteer Jerry Howard rushes a western grebe to the next cleaning stage at the oiled bird rescue center at the University of California, Davis, in San Pedro, Calif. Investigators are testing oil wiped from birds in an attempt to determine the origin of a mysterious oil spill somewhere in California.





## A bear-y cold day

A polar bear hides its face in its paws at the edge of a frozen pool at the Bronx Zoo in New York.



## In the mouth of the beast

Jordan Leung looks out from a lion costume during practice with the New York United Dragon & Lion Dance Group for upcoming Chinese New Year celebrations in New York's Chinatown.



## Kennedy clothing

A paper replica of the wedding dress Jacqueline Bouvier wore on her wedding day to John F. Kennedy is seen at the Marshall Field's store in Chicago. The display is in connection with a showing of her clothing, "Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years," currently on display at Chicago's Field Museum.



## Cool ride

Chris Conley, 12, reacts to the cold water while trying to ride his bike through a flooded portion of River View Park next to the Snoqualmie River in Snoqualmie, Wash.

## Horses die in stable fire

**TX** HOUSTON — A fire swept through a stable just north of Houston, killing 23 horses and mules.

The pre-dawn fire Tuesday at WT Stables is under investigation by the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office.

A stable employee who lives in a mobile home on the 5-acre property noticed the stable was burning shortly after 4 a.m., after his electrical service went out.

Workers pulled down part of the stable with a tractor, allowing a few animals to escape. But 21 animals died inside, and two of those that got out were so injured they had to be euthanized, stable owner Woody Taggart said.

Rogelio Arriaga said he lost three horses, including Kazzam, a 9-year-old performing Appaloosa trained to dance to rodeo music.

## Traffic stop nets \$1.5M

**TN** CHATTANOOGA — Drug agents discovered \$1.5 million hidden in a luxury vehicle they stopped for weaving on Interstate 75, the second million-dollar cash seizure in rural Bradley County in a year.

Officers who stopped the BMW sport utility vehicle Jan. 12 found the cash stashed in concealed compartments under the floorboard.

They said the driver, Jose Luis Serrano-Lopez, told them he was he was traveling from New York with narcotics money destined for the El Paso, Texas/Juarez, Mexico border.

## Lynx heads to Canada

**CO** DENVER — A Canada lynx that was released in Colorado two years ago looks to be heading home.

The adult male, which has meandered through Wyoming and Montana, was last heard of north of Missoula, Mont., in October, more than 800 miles as the crow flies from where it was released in March 2003 in Colorado's San Juan National Forest.

The big cat's exploits were depicted in the latest *Yellowstone* Science magazine and confirmed by Rick Kahn, Colorado Division of Wildlife lynx coordinator.

The lynx, which is wearing a radio collar, was trapped in British Columbia and released in Colorado as part of a program to restore the cat to the state. Lynx are an endangered species in Colorado.

## Sickout investigated

**CA** SAN FRANCISCO — The sheriff's department is investigating an apparent sickout by deputies at the main county jail after an incident in which an inmate beat a guard unconscious.

Sheriff Michael Hennessey said the inmate attacked the deputy in a medium-security wing Jan. 8 during lunch. David Wong, head of the deputies' union, said the inmate was on a special diet and was upset that his lunch had been delayed.

Another deputy intervened, but not before the first deputy suffered a broken shoulder and a gash to his head, Hennessey said. The deputy, who lost consciousness, was treated at a hospital for his injuries.

The jail was locked down after that weekend. On Wednesday, 13 of the 20 deputies who had been on

duty during the attack called in sick. It was their first scheduled day back at work since the incident.

## Light shines on project

**ME** PORTLAND, Maine — A lighthouse on the Kennebec River could be returned to the government as part of a multi-group effort to increase public awareness of the 107-year-old structure, a federal judge has ruled.

Squirrel Point Lighthouse in Arrowsic will likely be given to a nonprofit organization following a ruling from U.S. Magistrate Judge David Cohen. The decision still needs approval from federal Judge D. Brock Horby.

Attorneys for the Coast Guard and a citizens group seeking public access to the lighthouse said Tuesday it is unlikely Horby will overrule the decision.

An attorney for Squirrel Point Associates, which owns the lighthouse, said the group plans to file an objection to the decision.

The lighthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in January 1988. In February 1998, the Coast Guard transferred ownership of the lighthouse, for free, to Squirrel Point Associates.

## Errors caused deaths

**MN** ST. PAUL — Twenty patients died in Minnesota hospitals during a 15-month period because of medical errors or oversights including falls, faulty medical equipment and administration of the wrong medication, the state Health Department said in a new report.

The report, released Wednesday, documented 99 serious errors between July 1, 2003, and Oct. 6, 2004. Minnesota is the first state to report its mistakes under standards developed by the National Quality Forum, a Washington-based nonprofit. New Jersey and Connecticut also adopted the standards, which are being circulated elsewhere.

Minnesota's most common problem — not resulting in death or disability — was doctors forgetting foreign objects such as surgical sponges inside patients at the end of operations. That happened 31 times.

## Now too many tomatoes

**FL** HOMESTEAD — A fall tomato shortage has turned into a glut that Florida growers say has forced them to abandon 60 million pounds on the vine, generating pledges of help from the state.

State agriculture Commissioner Charles Bronson promised action to make sure consumers and wholesalers know the tomatoes are available.

## Prize must be shared

**OH** CLEVELAND — A postal employee who won a \$175,000 Mega Millions lottery prize with 20 co-workers who accused him of cheating them out of their cut, a jury said. Stephen Kyle had told co-workers that he bought the winning ticket with his own money instead of the money they've been giving him for four years to buy tickets.

Photos and stories from wire services

## FACES

# Affleck faces reality in the small screen

BY DANIEL FIENBERG  
Zap2it.com

LOS ANGELES — "First of all, I want to say that it's nice to be in a room that's just full of critics," observes a newly bearded Ben Affleck, addressing reporters at the semi-annual Television Critics Association press tour.

"That's sort of always been my dream. And you know what? You can hide it, but I feel the love. Critics love me. Let's face it."

For a man with an Oscar on his shelf at home, Affleck has spent an awful lot of time defending himself in the past several years. For a man who has coped with strained personal relationships made — through some large fault of his own — embarrassingly public, bouts with a variety of substances and compulsive behaviors and a string of box office bombs that suggest the curse of a Tiki God more than a negligent agent, Affleck's surprisingly at ease with television critics.

He may be joking about how critics in general love him, but the *book-to-screen* press has been remarkably generous to efforts as diverse as "Push, Nevada" and "Project Greenlight," which began its third season on Bravo in March (after spending its first two on HBO).

"You're all very nice," Affleck says with something that resembles sincerity. "It's those [experts] who do the movie writing that I don't like. You guys are wonderful, wonderful people."

Affleck seems comfortable with critics, and critics in turn feel comfortable with Affleck because the "Gigli" star has been successful at underexposing his television persona in almost inverse proportion to his bloated movie-star image.

"One of the things that keeps

me coming back is that I'm able to do it as a writer and as a producer, without kind of putting myself out there, without having to be the face of it and that's really rewarding," Affleck explains.

"As a writer, you have more control in television. You write movies, and they just get swept away and somebody else works with them, whereas in television it's really interesting and you have a chance to foster other people's talents." The reality of the situation is that Affleck's television endeavors haven't been that much more successful than "Surviving Christmas" or "Paycheck."

Despite an intriguing interactive premise and a unique look, "Push" was cancelled well before it could develop a following.

While "Project Greenlight" made for compelling television in its first two seasons on HBO, it has failed in its main goal — discovering new cinematic talent outside of the Hollywood mold factory.

This season, "Project Greenlight" will take a stab at new commercial viability, entrusting its winning director — eccentric lug John Gulager — with a gory splatter film, which will be distributed by Dimension, rather than stodgy parent Miramax.

At its core, though, Affleck hopes that "Greenlight" will continue to provide television viewers with their fix of voyeurism.

"So much of life now seems about being on TV and having your reality show," he says.

"If you're a billionaire, you have to have a show. If you're a hairdresser, you have to be on a show... The interesting thing is, most people think they want it, but they don't know that it is."

He sighs, "And when they find out what it is, they're not sure if they really wanted it to begin with."



Ben Affleck boosts his beloved Boston Red Sox at the October premiere of his movie "Surviving Christmas." Affleck will soon return to reality TV, where he says he enjoys his behind-the-scenes role.

## Wedding bells and pink slips

Before Donald Trump walks down the aisle for a third time, he'll strut back into the boardroom for the premiere of the third season of NBC's "The Apprentice."

Trump said the new season's "book smarts versus street smarts" boardroom sessions will have less "mean-ness" and more "emotion" compared with the previous season, which included screaming spats between runner-up Jennifer Massey and contestant Sandy Ferreira.

The real estate mogul called the confrontations, which were filmed last fall, "the best yet."

"I think they're deeper, more emotional," Trump said Tuesday.

"I think the emotion is what makes them

amazing. There are some that are unbelievable."

Although Trump wouldn't reveal who might be the next Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth or Raj Bhakta, he did use some choice words to describe the candidates from both book smarts team Magna and street smarts team Network.

Trump said Magna team member Danny Kastner, a marketing technology firm owner, is "smart" and "deceptive," while lawyer Ben Olevanger is "cunning." Network team member and real estate agent Audrey Evans is "very, very successful" and "she also happens to be very attractive."

Trump said race and sex don't factor into his firing process. "I don't think about it," he told the AP. "I can't think like that. I hire the person."

The new season of "The Apprentice" premiered in the States on Thursday night.

Trump will marry model Melania Knauss in Palm Beach, Fla., on Saturday.

## Hospital is baby friendly

Australian supermodel Elle Macpherson visited a hospital maternity ward to encourage new mothers to breast-feed their babies.

Macpherson, who promotes breast-feeding for UNICEF, was shown around the maternity unit at the Royal Oldham Hospital in Manchester, northern England, Wednesday.

She presented the hospital with a Baby Friendly Award for its work in supporting mothers who want to breast-feed.

Macpherson breast-fed her two sons and said it was "the best start in life that I could have given them."

Their Baby Friendly Award is a globally recognized standard of care.

## Sarajevo director heads Cannes

Director Emir Kusturica, a two-time winner of the Cannes Film Festival's top honor, will serve as president of this year's jury, organizers said Wednesday.

The Sarajevo-born director won the Palme d'Or for 1985's "When Father Was Away on Business" and 1995's "Underground."

Only three other directors have won the honor twice: Shohei Imamura of Japan, Eiji August of Denmark and Francis Ford Coppola of the United States.

The 58th Cannes Film Festival will take place May 11-22. Last year, the Cannes jury was headed by Quentin Tarantino.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



Trump



Macpherson



Kusturica

## YOUR MONEY

## Estate tax or not, a plan is still needed

BY JAN NORMAN  
The Orange County Register

The current federal estate tax is so goofy it cannot survive in its current form. That's the view of Gordon Schaller, tax- and estate-planning specialist with the Costa Mesa, Calif., office of the Greenberg Traurig law firm.

And for political reasons, 2005 is the year when Congress is most likely to fix it, one way or another, Schaller and lobbying groups agree. In many ways, they say, the uncertainty over the current system is worse than the tax.

Dena Battle, lobbyist with the National Federation of Independent Business, predicts that the federal estate tax will be repealed permanently. "It's only fair," she and other opponents say.

Pragmatists such as Schaller expect some form of estate tax to survive, if for no other reason than it has been around in one form or other since the late 1700s, when it was used to pay war debts.

Even though attorneys like Schaller, as well as accountants and insurance agents, reap billions of dollars from individuals and businesses trying to minimize their estate taxes, Schaller said he's not taking sides in the issue.

"Our firm is busy either way," he said. "Succession planning is vital for my clients, who tend to be closely held companies in the \$10 million to \$500 million revenue range."

Closely held companies that are family-owned account for 91 percent of all U.S. companies. And they have led the charge for the



Gordon Schaller, a tax- and estate-planning specialist at a law firm in Costa Mesa, Calif., helps family-business owners plan what happens after the owner dies.

past decade to kill what they call the "death tax." Among their arguments for abolishing it: Thousands of businesses have closed or been forced to sell in order to pay estate taxes, eliminating jobs. Thousands more were sold instead of being passed on to the second generation to prevent the estate tax from burdening the family. And untold numbers of family owners have spent billions of dollars on plans and insurance to save their companies and pay the tax.

Ninety business associations make up the Family Business Estate Tax Coalition, whose sole purpose is permanent repeal of the estate tax.

Congress passed reforms in 2001 that reduced the tax, but increased the uncertainty about its future. Under current law, the tax is being gradually phased out and will be eliminated in 2010 but then will be resurrected in full force in 2011—unless further legislation is passed.

Schaller explains that opponents of the tax accepted the 10-year sunset provision to get around a threatened Democrat filibuster in the Senate.

Neither President Bush nor the Republican-controlled Congress wants such a tax on their record, but if they postpone action beyond 2005, they'll face another election year in which passage will be more difficult, especially if the federal deficit is still large.

Because of the budget deficit, Congress can't afford to eliminate the \$22 billion a year the estate tax brings in, supporters for restoring the tax say. They add that only 2 percent of Americans pay estate taxes, largely because most estates are small enough to be exempt from the tax.

In 2005, estates of less than \$1.5 million are exempt from the estate tax.

They argue that states that have tied their estate taxes to the federal law will lose money, too.

Repeal proponents note that once the estate tax is repealed, heirs who sell estate assets will have to pay capital-gains tax instead. One study claims the new tax approach will raise \$36 billion a year, more than offsetting the estate-tax loss and still protecting

family businesses.

Owners of family businesses should not wait for Congress to resolve this issue, Schaller said. "I recommend my clients to plan based on the law they know, and that means planning that there will be an estate tax."

Since family businesses tend to be owned by a husband and wife, the first action to plan for is to defer the estate tax to the death of the second spouse, he said.

The second action is to limit the growth of the older generation's overall estate by starting to pass it on to the next generation. One method to accomplish this is a family partnership.

"The senior generation contributes assets, such as stock in the family business, into the partnership, and then gifts or sells partnership interests to children, grandchildren or trusts that benefit heirs," he said.

He recommends having the partnership appraised by a professional because the market value of a business may be 20 percent to 30 percent lower than its overall assets.

A third action is to use some cash flow from the business to buy life insurance that will pay the estate tax, Schaller said.

Business succession planning will still be important, he adds, no matter what happens to the estate tax.

## Fast facts about estate taxes

- Current estate-tax provisions and related facts:
- For a person who dies in 2005, the first \$1.5 million of estate is exempt from federal estate tax.
- Exemption increases each year, reaching \$3.5 million in 2009. There is no estate tax in 2010. Then in 2011, the portion of estates over \$1 million will again be subject to a 41 percent to 50 percent estate tax.
- Ninety-one percent of U.S. companies are owned/controlled by families.
- Forty-three percent of U.S. businesses are passed to second-generation family ownership.
- Federal government gets about \$22 billion yearly from estate taxes, 1.1 percent of all revenue.
- The average family business spends \$125,000 on attorneys, accountants and financial experts on estate planning over five years.
- If estate and gift taxes had been completely repealed in 1999, family-business advocates estimate that those businesses would have created 275,000 more jobs and \$1.7 trillion in capital by 2010.

Sources: Family Business Estate Tax Coalition, National Federation of Independent Business, Greenberg Traurig law firm

## THURSDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

## INDEXES

	52-week High	52-week Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD % Chg	52-week High	52-week Low
18,624.81	17,081.45	15.00	Dow Jones Industrial	10,671.47	-45.56	-0.43	-2.28	-1.61	-1.61
3,382.98	2,743.48	20.00	Dow Jones Transportation	3,513.42	-39.06	-1.10	-7.49	+14.06	+14.06
317.79	259.86	10.00	Dow Jones Utilities	332.81	-1.77	-0.53	-6.4	+27.08	+27.08
7,737.18	6,211.33	100.00	NYSE Composite	7,810.47	-48.80	-0.69	-3.39	+51.31	+51.31
1,477.48	1,150.74	10.00	Amex Index	1,495.48	-9.68	-0.68	-1.99	+51.48	+51.48
2,120.82	1,750.82	10.00	Nasdaq Composite	2,145.88	-27.11	-1.24	-5.36	+3.45	+3.45
1,231.90	1,060.72	10.00	S&P 500	1,175.42	-9.22	-0.78	-3.01	+25.45	+25.45
546.29	446.29	10.00	McGraw Hill	537.27	-1.14	-0.21	-0.33	+45.53	+45.53
656.11	515.90	10.00	Wall Street Journal	612.34	-5.57	-0.90	-6.82	+2.48	+2.48
			— WSJ Worldwide 2000					-2.62	-2.62

## NYSE

Most Active (\$1 or more)				Most Active (\$1 or more)				Most Active (\$1 or more)			
Name	Vol	Net Chg	% Chg	Name	Vol	Net Chg	% Chg	Name	Vol	Net Chg	% Chg
Alcoa	850,619	1.26	+1.4	SPDR	695,828	117.58	-7.2	Net100IT	118,1245	37.35	-7.3
Amgen	150,650	15.77	+9.0	Sealed Air	254,601	10.66	-1.1	SeriesX	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Boeing	335,642	24.44	+7.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesY	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Mediaco	346,677	14.38	+4.1	Glaxo	680,114	1.54	+0.6	SeriesZ	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesA	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesB	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesC	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesD	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesE	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesF	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesG	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesH	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesI	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesJ	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesK	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesL	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesM	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesN	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesO	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesP	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesQ	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesR	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesS	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesT	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesU	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesV	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesW	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesX	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Johnson & Johnson	251,646	1.24	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesY	870,646	5.54	-2.7
Merck	218,637	1.00	+0.3	United Therapeutics	199,655	18.56	-1.6	SeriesZ	870,646	5.54	-2.7
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Johnson & Johnson											







# Horoscope

The Cancer moon brings the focus back to the domestic cocoon. If things are not comfortable and orderly at home, you probably won't feel confident anywhere else in the world, so there's no point in going out before you "clean your room." If it takes you back to a 10-year-old mind-set, all the better. Being restricted actually had its benefits.

## TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(January 22). It's all about your charm this year. Improving your communication skills has a far-reaching effect on your finances and love life. You'll sock some savings away in April. Have confidence in your initial reactions this spring. What you first think is a mistake turns out extremely well in March. Fabulous relationships are had with Leos or Sagittarians.

## ARIES (March 21-April 19).

Offer a humble opinion. You can make a difference since folks are listening more closely than usual. The romantic sector of your life is energized by an empowering thought. Why settle for being continually disgruntled?

## TAURUS (April 20-May 20).

The real excitement comes from meeting people on the outer strata of your comfort zone. You're awed by the odd. But no matter how intoxicating new friends may be, don't neglect the old ones.

## GEMINI (May 21-June 21).

It's mesmerizing to watch people who are battling out of their league. Analyze what you see, and you'll gain the same confidence and ease. You'll be thrown into a similar situation next week.

## CANCER (June 22-July 22).

You're raking, growing — and freaking out. Break down your stress to its most elemental level — you perceive danger, and your body says, "Flee!" Explain to your body that the dangers are not real.

## LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).

Seek harmony in all things. Iterally and

figuratively. Harmonize along with the radio. Sync up your body language with your conversation partner's. Balance the books to create better financial accord.

## VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

Pragmatism works for you. How do you learn to excel at romance? The same way you learn to ride a bike, play baseball or perform at job interviews: through knowledge and practice.

## LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).

There are no quick fixes, so commit to the learning process. Besides, you're being watched by people who find your mind extremely attractive. The more education you get, the sexier you are.

## SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).

When you're hot, you're not — and you're HOT! Flirt, sing, boogie. Your enthusiasm for life will attract everything from financial opportunity to strange looks from people on the street.

## SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).

Procrastination is the enemy! Get up early, and get it done! Money/time-saving tip: When it comes to new recipes, household items or cleaning methods, the original is still the best.

## CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).

You've worked hard, and somehow, the grand total doesn't seem to reflect how much effort went into your project. Go back, and add it up again. You're forgetting the knowledge and experience you gained.

## AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19).

Excellent bargains are everywhere. Just be sure you really need what you're accumulating. Share your life with those who live at a distance. Your best moments today are spent laughing with family on the phone.

## PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

You want to be the very best at your various roles in life. This desire will get you only halfway. Not knowing how to go to the rest of the way is frustrating. Ask your higher consciousness for help.

Creators Syndicate

## Holiday Mathis



## Calvin and Hobbes



## Jump Start



## Zits



## Cathy



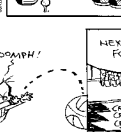
## Hi and Lois



## Beetle Bailey



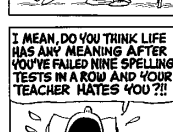
## Red Rover



## Better or Worse



## Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



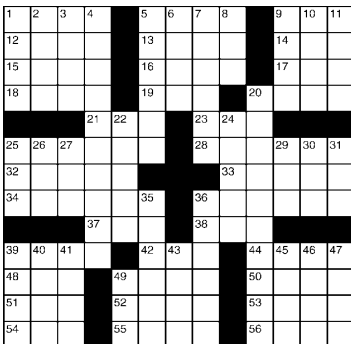
Hagar



Garfield



## Eugene Sheffer Crossword



## Across

- 1 Bloke  
5 Austin Powers' power source  
9 Pump up the volume  
12 Wheels of fortune?  
13 Finished  
14 Guy's companion  
15 Stench  
16 Catcher's catcher  
17 Commotion  
18 Escortire  
19 Mag. staffers  
20 Caudron concoction  
21 Chignon  
23 "Caught ya!"  
25 Sci-fi critter, often  
28 "Tuesdays With..."  
32 Dazzling designs  
33 Vestige  
34 Underworld god  
36 Big-enough fish  
37 Red deer  
38 The whole enchilada  
39 "Monopoly" corner  
42 Listening device  
44 Actor Julia  
48 Chic no more  
49 Performer with an ego  
50 Look lecherously  
51 Before  
52 Condo, e.g.  
53 It's good for a breather

## Down

- 14 Oafish one  
21 Stash  
3 "Famous" cookie-maker  
4 Lucrative government projects  
5 Instant  
6 "Metamorphoses" poet  
7 Stuff thrown overboard  
8 Tidbit  
9 Gelling agent  
10 Put together  
11 Oxen's burden  
20 Aerobic maneuver  
22 Before  
24 Arthur Hailey novel  
25 Cattle call  
26 Boom times  
27 Skater Babilonia  
29 Knock  
30 Mileu for 27-Down  
31 Always  
35 Flocks of geese in flight  
36 Chopping spree?  
39 "Friends" spinoff  
40 Emanation  
41 Particular  
43 Hertz rival  
45 Malaria symptom  
46 Radius' neighbor  
47 Staying power  
49 Payable

## Answer to Previous Puzzle



I-22

## CRYPTOQUIP

UBK JOGRFAVAVD BAVA  
PR O NKU FAEUA, EGU  
UNAX ZPROJXX PVKRAF KGU

UNAPV FPZZAVARIAD.  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: A GUY HAD FLIPPED A LAUNDRY DETERGENT CONTAINER ON THE SHELF, SO I TURNED THE TIDE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals F

# Don't feel guilty for helping out

**Dear Abby:** I'm a 34-year-old professional woman who has never married. For the last two years, I have been dating "Mel," the single father of 11-year-old "Tracey." We live separately, but I'm at their house frequently, helping with and sharing meals, helping Tracey with her homework, contributing to and buying groceries, doing dishes and other chores. I often sleep at Mel's and am involved in the evening "tucking in" ritual. It has been an enlightening and challenging experience for me.

When I do these things independently — keep in mind that Mel and Tracey are almost always invited to participate in whatever I do — he often chooses to stay home. Then he tells me it's unfair that I get "all the freedom" and he's stuck here with the kid again. Mel has never had a baby sister, although the parents of Tracey's friends were willing to have her on play dates

a few times when we first started dating.

I try to be fair and helpful, but it seems like Mel resents me (or at least his life choices) for not always dedicating myself to "the family." Is he right? Am I being selfish? Should I stand my ground even if it results in the end of the relationship?

**Dear Abby**



**— Cornered in Montana**

**Dear Cornered:** Stand your ground and recognize that you are dealing with a negative personality. Rather than being grateful for everything you do for him and his daughter, Mel is attempting to make you feel guilty for not doing more. It's not selfish to want or need personal time, so please don't allow yourself to be put on the defensive or manipulated.

There is a reason you signed your letter "Cornered."

Before devoting more time to the relationship, carefully consider what his expectations of you

are and whether you're willing and able to meet them.

**Dear Abby:** I recently gave birth to a beautiful baby girl and named her "Amber Marie." Amber's name was a last-minute decision. Until I went into labor, my husband and I were leaning toward naming her Rhonda Marie, after a deceased relative. When we announced the change, many family members were less than thrilled. Amber Marie is now 4 months old and some family members are saying things like, "Hi, Amber, you were supposed to be named Rhonda," or "I still like the name Rhonda better."

What should I say to these people?

**— New Mommy in Michigan**  
**Dear New Mommy:** Say, "Please stop saying that. Her name is Amber, and I don't want her to be confused."

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.ueppress.com/dearabby> or via e-mail at [dearabby@ueppress.com](mailto:dearabby@ueppress.com).

## JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

**CHURS**

**KEVOE**

**TABBIR**

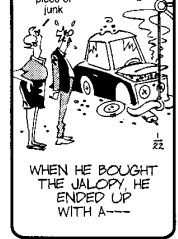
**POLEEP**

**A:** "       " OF

Yesterday's Jumbles: FEWER HEAVY STURDY EFFIGY

## THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers Monday)

Answer: She went away to college in a new car because she — WAS "GIFTED"

# 2nd wife deserves insurance policy

**Dear Annie:** My wife's mother died 20 years ago, and her father married "Lucy" about a year after they were a very happy couple, although some of my wife's siblings were resentful of their marriage.

When Dad developed Alzheimer's, my wife and I moved closer so she could spend more time with him. During this time, she developed a close friendship with Lucy and also gave Lucy some much-needed downtime. This was the only break Lucy was able to get, even though the other siblings lived nearby.

Dad died recently. To say that Lucy was a wonderful, dedicated wife and caregiver would be an understatement. My wife, the eldest of the kids, helped with pre-planning the funeral as well as with some of the necessary legal paperwork. Unfortunately, after the funeral, two of my wife's sisters decided that the "kids" were entitled to Dad's meager life insurance policy.

**Annie's Mailbox**



My wife and I believe this policy should go to Lucy. She is nearly 70 years old and is going to need the money. The siblings have the entire family (even our children) stirred up against my wife. They are wrongly convinced that she and Lucy conspired against them. Lucy was a good wife for 19 years.

Dad's will and insurance policy are clear. I think the siblings are showing intense greed over a small amount of money (under \$30,000).

**— Embarrassed by The Family**  
**Dear Embarrassed:** Those siblings are trying to punish Lucy for the "crime" of marrying their father, and your wife is caught in the crossfire. Since Dad's will and insurance policy are clear, let the lawyers handle the vultures. Your wife should hold her head up and ignore their mean-spirited selfishness.

**Dear Annie:** What is your opinion about forcing kids to eat?

My wife and I have a fundamental disagreement on this matter. Our children are all under the age of 11. She says, "You eat what you get," and there is no negotiation. You have to finish all your meal, and if you do not, you will get it the next day for breakfast.

On the other hand, I went through this as a child and can tell you it felt like abuse. It destroyed my self-esteem, which could explain many related problems, like failing school, bed-wetting, fighting with siblings and so on.

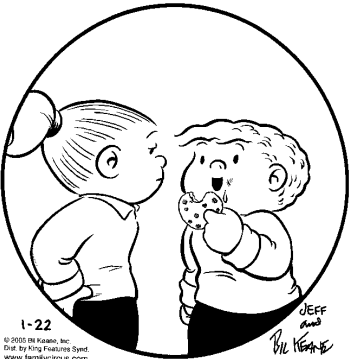
**— Brooklyn, N.Y.**  
**Dear Brooklyn:** We suspect the food issue was only one of many that plagued your childhood.

Nonetheless, you do not think children should be forced to clean their plates. Children should be exposed to a variety of foods and encouraged to try them, but they should not have to finish every bite.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to [anniesmailbox@comcast.net](mailto:anniesmailbox@comcast.net), or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

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## Family Circus



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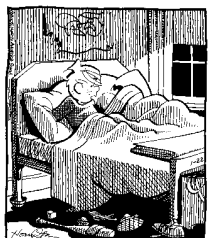
"I like chocolate chip cookies except for the cookie part."

**GRAFFITI**

WHEN SOME PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO WORK FOR SOMETHING THEY RAY FOR IT

WGA #422

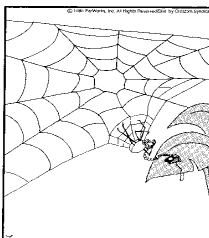
## Demis the Menace



"DON'T WORRY ABOUT MONSTERS UNDER THE BED, JOE. MY MOM SAID MY DIRT SOCKS WILL KEEP 'EM AWAY."

## © Gary Larson

## The Far Side



"Don't ask me how it happened, Stan—just get your abdomen over here and get me unstuck!"

## Non Sequitur



"HE WAS COUNTING ON A BIG TURNOUT OF NEGROES, Y'KNOW"







# Warriors not quite golden

## Even with Mullin calling shots, team still losing

BY JANIE MCCAULEY  
The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. It seems even Chris Mullin is having a tough time watching the struggling Golden State Warriors.

The team's executive vice president of basketball operations is rarely visible at games, and has been spending a lot of time on the road, most recently out of the country.

Even with Mullin in charge, the Warriors still are getting the same disappointing results.

Instead of competing with the league's top teams, the Warriors have the second worst record in the Western Conference and are four games behind last season's pace that led to a major overhaul and Mullin's promotion.

Mullin, one of the most beloved players in franchise history, never promised to turn things around overnight, but he did say he expected the playoff-starved Warriors to be a legitimate postseason contender this season.

Right now, that seems like a lost shot.

Yet many around this franchise remain upbeat, especially now that leading scorer Jason Richardson is back. Richardson had a career-high 42 points and eight assists in his first game back from an ankle injury in Monday night's victory over Denver, helping the Warriors end a nine-game losing streak.

There have been few bright spots for a team that won only 12 of its first 39 games. Golden State has missed the playoffs the past 10 seasons.

"They're way overmatched in the Western Conference," longtime NBA coach and current TNT analyst Doug Collins said. "But when you take over a situation like this, your patience has to be there, and what's happened is all people know is the last 10 years they've been losing. ... The hardest thing to do in sports is to break the losing culture."



After leading Stanford to the second round of the NCAA tournament for 10 straight years, Mike Montgomery, right, signed a four-year, \$10 million contract to become the coach of the Golden State Warriors. Three games into the season, Montgomery had more losses than with the Cardinal in 32 games last season.

"Mully's going to do it. He's a very smart basketball guy. He'll get it done."

That's what team president Robert Rowell is banking on.

So far, new coach Mike Montgomery and a cast of playoff-tested veterans have been unable to establish any kind of momentum. Some nights, the Warriors play three solid quarters and one lousy one.

Or they make a furious comeback only to lose late.

"There's a reason why we hired Chris and put him in the position he's in," Rowell said. "We spent a lot of time together and I'm pleased with where we're going. The hardest part is to lose basketball games and continue to stay upbeat. But I think we have a purpose, we have a direction and we have a plan. We're going to get it done here."

Center Dale Davis is disgruntled about his lack of playing time and wants out. Notorious season ticketholder Mark Anthony Jones, well known around the league for his humorous heckling from a courtside corner, already left. He recently returned his two tickets — \$495 a pop — to the team and now follows the NBA from his couch. But the Warriors resold his seats the next day.

They signed Richardson and forward Troy Murphy to expensive, long-term deals before the season started, and both players have begun to shoulder their share of the load.

The Warriors want nothing more than to end their embarrassing playoff drought, and the organization believes retaining the young talent such as Richardson and Murphy is a key step toward achieving that.

The team has fewer wins at this stage than it did a year ago during first coach Eric Musselwhite's second season. There have been occasional miscommunications between players and the coaching staff, which contributed to Golden State's 111-104 home loss to the Orlando Magic last month.

Richardson noticed a lot while sitting on the bench for nine games nursing a sprained ankle. One glaring problem kept coming to his attention: effort.

"We have to have energy," he said. "We've got a few guys playing hard, but we've got to get everybody playing hard. You get that and we'll get on a roll again."

"This is the best team I've been on since I've been here, as far as teammates and the way we play

together. When we do want to play together, we're a tough team to play against. We're going to try to bring that back to how we were before I got hurt and bring back that energy we have. It's a long season still."

Some at Stanford thought Montgomery was crazy to leave The Farm after 18 years and bolt for the unforgiving lifestyle of the NBA.

But Montgomery said this was something he'd always thought about, and the four-year,

### So far ... so-so

The Golden State Warriors' game-by-game record through 39 games:

Date	Result, Opponent	Record
Nov. 3	L, 78-75 vs. Portland	(0-1)
Nov. 5	L, 102-86 vs. Utah	(0-2)
Nov. 6	L, 94-88 vs. L.A. Clippers	(0-3)
Nov. 8	L, 101-98 (OT) at Dallas	(0-4)
Nov. 10	L, 91-71 at San Antonio	(0-5)
Nov. 12	L, 96-87 at Memphis	(0-6)
Nov. 13	W, 103-87 at Charlotte	(1-5)
Nov. 15	L, 99-88 at Cleveland	(1-6)
Nov. 17	W, 99-85 vs. Chicago	(2-6)
Nov. 20	L, 100-87 vs. Memphis	(2-8)
Nov. 23	W, 115-108 (3OT) vs. N.O.	(3-8)
Nov. 26	L, 95-87 vs. L.A. Clippers	(3-9)
Nov. 28	L, 103-89 at L.A. Clippers	(3-10)
Dec. 1	L, 107-89 vs. Minnesota	(3-11)
Dec. 3	L, 97-88 at L.A. Lakers	(3-12)
Dec. 4	W, 104-96 vs. Indiana	(4-12)
Dec. 6	W, 119-109 vs. Boston	(5-12)
Dec. 7	L, 118-104 at Phoenix	(5-13)
Dec. 9	W, 119-109 vs. Orlando	(6-13)
Dec. 12	W, 99-87 vs. Charlotte	(7-13)
Dec. 14	W, 111-107 at Dallas	(8-13)
Dec. 15	L, 96-88 at New Orleans	(7-14)
Dec. 17	L, 100-83 at Houston	(7-15)
Dec. 18	L, 104-85 at San Antonio	(7-16)
Dec. 20	L, 103-101 vs. Washington	(7-18)
Dec. 22	W, 109-89 vs. Memphis	(8-18)
Dec. 26	W, 99-84 at Sacramento	(9-18)
Dec. 27	W, 104-101 vs. Denver	(10-18)
Dec. 29	W, 111-105 vs. Toronto	(11-18)
Jan. 1	L, 97-88 at Portland	(11-19)
Jan. 3	L, 112-104 vs. Philadelphia	(11-20)
Jan. 5	L, 84-83 at Boston	(11-21)
Jan. 7	L, 82-72 at New Jersey	(11-22)
Jan. 9	L, 109-87 at Toronto	(11-23)
Jan. 10	L, 94-85 at Chicago	(11-24)
Jan. 12	L, 96-91 vs. Miami	(11-25)
Jan. 14	L, 103-84 at Seattle	(11-26)
Jan. 15	L, 104-102 vs. L.A. Lakers	(11-27)
Jan. 17	W, 107-97 vs. Denver	(12-27)

Source: nba.com

\$10 million contract helped persuade him after he took the Cardinal to the second round of the NCAA tournament the past 10 seasons.

Three games into the season, Montgomery already had more defeats — three — than he did in 32 games with the Cardinal last season.

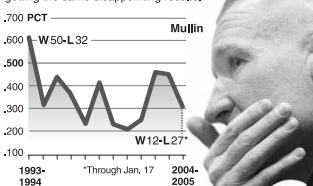
Stanford won its first 26 games last season and finished 30-2. "I've got a list a mile long of things we don't do as well as I think we need to do them or could do them in time," he said.

"It's not something that happens over night. ... I think that we're a better team than our record, but that's easy for me to say."

"You have to prove that."

### Trying to lose their losing ways

With Chris Mullin in charge, the playoff-starved Golden State Warriors were expected to be a legitimate postseason contender this season. Since last making the playoffs in the 1993-94 season, they are still getting the same disappointing results.



SOURCE: National Basketball Association



Jason Richardson returned from an ankle injury Monday night and scored 42 points as the Warriors snapped a nine-game losing streak with a 107-97 victory over the Denver Nuggets.

# Agassi defeats Dent, advances to fourth round

## Mauresmo, Kuznetsova, S. Williams, Sharapova advance on women's side

BY PAUL ALEXANDER  
The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Four-time champion Andre Agassi used his reach and stinging passes to hold off Taylor Dent 7-5, 7-6 (3), 6-1 Friday, reaching the fourth round of the Australian Open.

Agassi moved closer to a showdown with Roger Federer. The eighth-seeded Agassi never faltered against his fellow American. Showing no ill effects from a torn tendon in his right hip, sustained just before the season's opening Grand Slam tournament, Agassi committed only six unforced errors — none in the final set.

The 29th-seeded Dent rushed the net on 136 of the 201 points but constantly found himself lunging and diving for shots, and winning only 51 percent of the forays. The packed center court roared in approval of the strong performance by both players.

"It's always a bit of a deceiving



Andre Agassi takes a drink during his match against compatriot Taylor Dent in the Australian Open on Friday. Agassi, who suffered a slight hip injury before the tournament, defeated Dent 7-5, 7-6 (3), 6-1.

stat when you got a guy that's putting so much pressure," Agassi said. "It seems like any time I did miss, it was because he was putting pressure on me."

Dent is one of the few pure serve-and-volleyers left in tennis. "If you're not on your game, he's one of the worst guys to play," Agassi said. "The guy's really talented, can make a lot of shots that you just don't expect him to be able to pull off, and he does them at the most important times."

Agassi is one victory from a quarterfinal match with Federer. The top seed lost his first service game, then got back on track and advanced when Finland's Jarkko Nieminen quit with an abdominal muscle tear on a day when injuries played a role in several matches.

Agassi next faces another power player, No. 11 Joachim Johansson of Sweden, who survived a four-hour struggle against a 24-Peliciano Lopez of Spain that went to 13-11 in the fifth set.

"Tennis can be a very cruel and sometimes arguably unfair sport," Agassi said. "You've got to deal with what's thrown at you. I can honestly say I'm glad I didn't go 13-11 in the fifth."

Playing better after injuring his right ankle, fourth-seeded Marat Safin was testy at times but kept his notorious temper in check in a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory against Croatia's Mario Ančić.

"When I twisted my ankle, I just kind of stopped a little bit but thinking about the way I was playing," Safin said.

French Open champion Gaston Gaudio, seeded 10th, was able to continue after treatment on both thighs, but Dominik Hrbaty upset him in five sets despite 88 un-

forced errors.

Lisa Raymond lasted only one game of her doubles match before retiring with a strained back muscle, leaving her doubtful for her third-round match Saturday against French Open champ Anastasia Myskina.

In another doubles match, 46-year-old Martin Navratilova advanced to the third round with Daniela Hantuchova.

Agassi was down 4-1 in the first set before coming back, although Dent still nearly forced a tiebreak. Then Agassi went up a break early in the second set, only to see Dent tie it 3-3.

Dent fended off five break points while serving at 5-5, then squandered triple break point in the next game. At deuce, Agassi made a rare venture to the net and tapped a backhand drop volley that briefly rolled along the tape before falling for a winner.

Agassi never trailed in the tiebreaker, finishing it with a crisp backhand crosscourt pass. That seemed to take the steam out of Dent, who won only 11 points in the last set.

The 34-year-old Agassi, who refused to come to Australia early in his career, called the decision one of his greatest regrets.

"I keep trying to make up for it," he said.

And he gave no indication he plans to retire soon. When commentator Jim Courier asked when his son Jaden might be playing Pete Sampras' son Christian, Agassi said: "Would it shock you if I told you I was going to play Christian Sampras before Jaden does?"

In women's singles, second-ranked Amelie Mauresmo and U.S. Open winner Svetlana Kuznetsova won in straight sets

and will face unseeded opponents in the fourth round.

Serena Williams, seeded seventh, ended the run of wild card Samia Mirza, the first Indian woman to reach the second round of a Grand Slam. Williams defeated Mirza 6-1, 4-4, ending with a second-serve ace and skipping off the court. She next meets No. 11 Nadia Petrova.

Mauresmo defeated Serbian teenager Ana Ivanovic 6-2, 7-5 and awaits Evgenia Linaetskaya, a 6-3, 6-4 winner over American Amy Frazier.

Williams seeded 15th, 15th-seeded Silvia Farina Elia cruised past British qualifier Elena Baltacha 6-1, 6-0.

On the men's side, Sweden's Thomas Johansson, seeded 30th, survived his third consecutive five-set match, downed American Kevin Kim, No. 13 Tommy Robredo of Spain fell in straight sets to qualifier Marcos Baghdatis, who has won 17 of 18 matches, including qualifying.

### Tennis scoreboard

#### Australian Open

Friday  
At Melbourne Park  
Melbourne, Australia

Purses: \$14.5 million (Grand Slam)

Surface: Hard-Outdoor

Single

Men

Marat Safin (4), Russia, def. Mario Ancic (28), Croatia, 2-6, 3-6, 6-4.

Dominik Hrbaty (20), Slovakia, def. Gaston Gaudio (10), Argentina, 7-6 (3), 6-7 (8), 6-7 (1), 6-1, 6-3.

Thomas Johansson (30), Sweden, def. Kevin Kim (13), United States, 2-6, 6-2, 6-7 (4), 6-2.

Oliver Rochus (Belgium), def. Karol Beck (Slovakia), 6-7 (8), 6-1, 6-4, 6-2.

Roger Federer (1), Switzerland, def. Jarkko Nieminen (Finland), 6-2, 5-2, 6-2.

Marcos Baghdatis (Cyprus), def. Tommy Robredo (13), Spain, 7-6 (2), 6-4, 6-1.

Andre Agassi (8), United States, def. Taylor Dent (29), United States, 7-5, 7-6 (3), 6-1.

Joachim Johansson (11), Sweden, def. Feliciano Lopez (24), Spain, 6-3, 3-6, 5-7, 7-6 (2), 13-11.

Women

Amelie Mauresmo (2), France, def. Ana Ivanovic (Serbia-Montenegro), 6-2, 7-5.

Vera Douchieva (Russia), def. Anna-Lena Gorenfeld (Germany), 7-5, 6-4.

Evgenia Linaetskaya (Russia), def. Amy Frazier (13), United States, 6-3, 6-4.

Silvia Farina Elia (15), Italy, def. Elena Baltacha (6), Britain, 6-1, 6-0.

Svetlana Kuznetsova (5), Russia, def. Marianna Diaz-Civita (Argentina), 6-2, 7-5, 6-3.

Nadia Petrova (11), Russia, def. Magdalena Maleeva (22), Bulgaria, 6-4, 6-4.

Serena Williams (7), United States, def. Samia Mirza (India), 6-1, 6-4.

Maria Sharapova (4), Russia, def. Li Na (China), 6-4, 6-2.

Doubles

Men

Jurgen Melzer (Austria), and Alexander Waske (Germany), def. Martin Garcia and Mariano Hood (Argentina), 6-1, 7-5.

Jonas Bjorkman (Sweden), and Max Mirnyi (4), Belarus, def. Stephen Huss and Peter Lukaz (28), Australia, 7-5, 6-1.

Lu Yen-Hsun (Taiwan), and Takao Suzuki (Japan), def. Gabriel Galimberti and Filippo Volandri (Italy), 6-3, 6-2.

Women

Anastasia Myskina (and Vera Zvonareva (7), Russia), def. Bryanne Stewart and Samantha Stosur (Australia), 7-6 (4), 6-7 (3), 7-6 (4).

Janez Loe (Taiwan), and Max Mirnyi (4), Belarus, def. Jelena Jankovic (Serbia-Montenegro), 6-3, 6-4.

Svetlana Kuznetsova (Russia), and Alicia Molik (Australia), def. Maria Claret (Estonia), and Flavia Pennetta (Italy), 6-3, 6-3.

"Finally, after forever it seems, (I was) able to feel my serve," Williams said. "So I was really happy about that."

Wimbledon winner Maria Sharapova beat China's Li Na 6-0, 6-2. Li had only three winners in her 50-minute loss. Sharapova, one of three Russians among the top six seeded players, next meets 15th-seeded Silvia Farina Elia of Italy.

"I'm a much better player than I was seven months ago," Sharapova said.

Mauresmo defeated Serbian teenager Ana Ivanovic 6-2, 7-5 and awaits Evgenia Linaetskaya, a 6-3, 6-4 winner over American Amy Frazier.

"It's a long way still — three matches down, four to go and some good players still in the field," Mauresmo said, referring to prospects for her first Grand Slam tournament title. "I'm happy with how things are going."

Kuznetsova made 48 unforced errors in her 6-3, 7-6 (5) win over Mariana Diaz-Civita. Also, 15th-seeded Silvia Farina Elia cruised past British qualifier Elena Baltacha 6-1, 6-0.

On the men's side, Sweden's Thomas Johansson, seeded 30th, survived his third consecutive five-set match, downed American Kevin Kim, No. 13 Tommy Robredo of Spain fell in straight sets to qualifier Marcos Baghdatis, who has won 17 of 18 matches, including qualifying.

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# Head carries No. 1 Illini again in OT victory over No. 23 Iowa

The Associated Press

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Luther Head pulled Illinois through one of its worst games in the season.

The senior scorer when his teammates couldn't Thursday night, finishing with 25 points and six steals to lead the top-ranked Illini to a 73-68 overtime victory over No. 23 Iowa.

"Luther was huge," coach Bruce Weber said after his team shot a season-worst 33 percent. "He just did a lot of big things for us."

Head scored all of the Illini's points during a 12-2 run against the Hawkeyes and his driving layup with 40 seconds left in overtime helped seal the win. He played 42 minutes and spent the second half defending Iowa's top scorer, Pierce Pierce, who finished with 22 points.

"I'm really tired and I can't wait to go home," Head said.

It was the fourth straight game Head led the Illini (19-0, 5-0 Big Ten) in scoring, and it followed a 26-point effort against Northwestern last Saturday.

"He's a very intelligent player," said Iowa's Greg Brunner, whose drive to the hoop with 3.8 seconds left in regulation tied the



score at 65 and forced the overtime. "He knows his strengths, he doesn't do anything outside of that. When you play to your strengths, it's hard to make mistakes."

Head took control after Illinois' early attempts to attack Iowa inside failed because of missed shots by big men James Augustine and Roger Powell Jr. They wound up a combined 3-for-21 from the field.

A three-pointer with 9:03 to go in the first half triggered Head's 12-point run that put Illinois up 26-18. Another three-pointer by Head gave the Illini a 47-34 lead with 14:41 left in the second half.

But the Hawkeyes (13-4, 1-3) battled back, reeling off 10 straight points during an 18-5 run that tied it at 52-52 with 9:16 remaining.

Another three-pointer from Head stopped the run, but the Hawkeyes outscored Illinois 7-1 in the final 1:06. Illinois scored eight points in overtime on six free throws and Head's layup.

"I thought our defense was outstanding, but in the overtime they made six free throws and we made one," Iowa coach Steve Alford said. "It really came down to the foul line."

Illinois was 23-for-31 from the free-throw line while Iowa was 6-for-12, and the Illini won the rebounding battle, especially on the offensive end where they held an 18-9 advantage.

"They killed us on the boards tonight," Pierce said. "They had a lot of tip-ins at crucial points in the game and we couldn't finish at the free-throw line."

The Illini hit only 22 of 67 shots from the field and were 6-for-28 from three-point range.

"Maybe we needed a game like this to get a little jolt of energy," Weber said. "If they don't learn a lesson, it's going to cost us. They got lucky this time, maybe it will cost us next time."

**San Francisco 73, No. 11 Gonzaga 70:** At San Francisco, Jerome Gumbs had 18 points and a career-high 13 rebounds, and the Dons snapped a 12-game losing streak to the Zags.

San Francisco outscored 9-0 at home this season behind 10 three-pointers, but they had to



Senior Luther Head, right, who has led top-ranked Illinois in scoring the past four games, scored 25 on Thursday night as the Illini defeated No. 23 Iowa 73-68 in overtime in Champaign, Ill.

hold off a furious comeback attempt in the closing minutes. USF (11-6, 2-2 West Coast Conference) upset a Top-20 opponent for the first time since an 82-69 victory over No. 13 Xavier on Nov. 28, 1998, in the Puerto Rico Shootout.

Derek Raivo scored seven straight points in the final two minutes for the Zags (13-4, 3-2), who pulled to 72-70 on David Pendergast's three-pointer with 11.3 seconds left.

Raivo missed from the top of the arc moments before the final buzzer.

**No. 13 Arizona 74, Oregon 66:** At Eugene, Ore., Salim Stoudamire scored 27 points and Channing Frye had 17 to lead the Wildcats past the Ducks.

Hassan Adams added 13 points, six assists and six rebounds for Arizona (15-3, 5-1 Pac-10), which beat the Ducks (11-4, 3-3) for the fifth straight time. Bryce Taylor led Oregon with 20 points, and Aaron Quicks added 15 points and six assists.

**DePaul 85, No. 25 Marquette 72:** At Rosemont, Ill., Sammy Mejia scored a career-high 26 points and the Blue Demons used a tough defense and 21 offensive rebounds to beat the Golden Eagles.

Lorenzo Thompson added a career-high 17 points and Quentin Grayer had 15 for DePaul (11-4, 3-1 Conference USA). Dameron Mason's 24 points paced Marquette (14-3, 2-2) in a rough and physical 100th meeting between the schools.

## More-comfortable Williams Bearcats' top shooter

### Change in position produced noticeable change in Cincinnati guard's offensive production



Pressed into service at point guard last season, Cincinnati's Nick Williams averaged 6.7 points a game. Back at shooting guard this season, he's become the No. 20 Bearcats' most reliable outside shooter.

BY JOE KAY

The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — In his first season at Cincinnati, heralded shooter Nick Williams got lost in the shuffle.

The Bearcats were so desperate for a point guard that they moved Williams to the unfamiliar spot. Not surprisingly, he failed miserably.

Back in his accustomed role, the quick guard with the soft touch has blossomed into the 20th-ranked Bearcats' best shooter. He made all five of his shots from beyond the arc in the second half Wednesday night, leading Cincinnati to an 80-58 victory over Charlotte.

"This is the best I've ever shot the ball," said Williams, who had a career-high 22 points.

It's coming at the right time for him and his team.

Williams arrived at Cincinnati after transferring from Kansas State, where he started 25 games as a freshman and averaged nine points. The Bearcats already had two outside shooters last season — Field Williams and Tony Bobbitt — but badly needed a point guard.

They moved Nick Williams from his accustomed spot as a shooter, turning him into a ball handler.

He never got comfortable, and it showed.

Williams' shooting percentage dipped and he averaged only 6.7 points and 2.1 assists per game. His worst moment came against cross-town rival Xavier, when he threw the ball away in the closing seconds to seal the Musketeers' victory.

"We put him in a bad spot, probably a year ago by trying to make him a point guard," coach Bob Huggins said.

"I just thought he was really tentative to start the season. He wasn't aggressive enough or assertive enough."

With Field Williams and Bobbitt gone, the Bearcats moved him back to shooting guard this season. A thumb injury set him back, and his shot was out of whack during the first 15 games, when he went only 12-for-47 from behind the arc.

He worked a hitch out of his shot last week, and went 6-for-8 from behind the arc in a loss to Louisville on Saturday. Williams made six more threes against Charlotte, which packed in a zone defense to stop the Bearcats' front line, leaving the perimeter open.

Once Williams started making shots, the Bearcats had more options to score.

"In this league, you're not going to be able to do it with just one guy," Charlotte coach Bobby Lutz said. "And they certainly don't have just one guy. To beat

the better teams, you have to have balance, and they certainly had it in the second half."

Williams has scored 40 points in the last two games, the best stretch in his career. Huggins thinks most if it has to do with Williams' comfort level.

"The other day, we spent a lot of time trying to fix his shot," Huggins said. "It has really helped him. A lot of it is confidence."

His teammates are quickly gaining confidence in him, trying to get him the ball whenever possible. Until Williams started hitting outside shots, the Bearcats' only reliable option was to get the ball inside to power forward Jason Maxiell, who usually is double-teamed.

"It's more of a relief," said Maxiell, who had 23 points against Charlotte.

The Bearcats have one of the nation's top defenses, allowing an average of 62.4 points per game. Opponents are shooting only 35.9 percent from the field. Much of that is a result of Huggins' emphasis in practice.

"So much of our practices are defense-oriented," Williams said. "It wears you out. You've got to be motivated to get in the gym on your own and work on offense."

He thinks he's fixed his shot. Now, it's just a matter of continuing to play with confidence.

"It's a combination of a lot of things," Williams said.

"I'm just trying to stay in a groove now."



# Lenman shows he's still got game, leads Buick U.S. Ryder Cup captain opens with 10-under 62 on North course at Torrey Pines

BY DOUG FERGUSON  
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Not long after he was appointed Ryder Cup captain, Tom Lehman said he would like to play for the U.S. team next year in Ireland. Considering he hasn't won in five years, some people thought it was a joke.

Apparently not.

"It's a goal. It's a dream," Lehman said after tying his career-low round Thursday, a 10-under 62 on the North course at Torrey Pines that gave him a one-shot lead over Dean Wilson in the Buick Invitational.

"I'd like to be able to play well to be on the team," he said. "It would be a unique situation."

Lehman said he would still remain captain, working with assistants Loren Roberts and Corey Pavin. There hasn't been a playing captain in the Ryder Cup since Arnold Palmer in 1963 at East Lake.

The 2006 matches are 20 months away. And Lehman has said he wouldn't take a spot on the team if he slipped in the back door by relying on a bunch of top-10 finishes without winning. Plus, the bulk of the Ryder Cup points will be earned next year, and "it would be an upset" if he led the team.



Tom Lehman hits from a fairway bunker on the 18th hole of the North course at Torrey Pines during the first round of the Buick Invitational on Thursday. Lehman, who has not won an event since the 2000 Phoenix Open, is the first-round leader at 10 under.

"But if my game keeps progressing, you never know," he said.

The idea Friday was for his game to progress by shifting over to the South course, which is so tough that players don't need a reminder it will hold the 2008 U.S. Open, while the North course will hold a bunch of corporate tournaments.

Just look at the leader board

after one round of the Buick Invitational.

All but two of the top scores came from the North course, which measures a meager 6,573 yards and played nearly three shots easier than the South course.

The exceptions were Aaron Baddeley (66) and Peter Lonard (67), whose round included an

ace on the par-3 third hole with a 5-iron.

Among the top six players in the world at Torrey Pines, only Ernie Els played the North course and took advantage. Despite a few sloppy shots, he took advantage with nine birdies for a 7-under 65.

"You have one chance to shoot something really decent," Els said. "And you've got to hope for the best on the South. These are totally different. One is like a pitch-and-putt, and then you get to the real world."

Over in the real world, Tiger Woods struggled with lingering affects from the flu by making a 45-foot birdie on the par-3 third and twice saving par with long putts for a 69, putting him in a large group that included Sergio Garcia.

Vijay Singh, who missed his one cut last year in the Buick Invitational, birdied his final hole for a 71 on the South. Phil Mickelson made an inauspicious debut by hitting only five fairways, playing for the par 5s in 2 over and shooting 72.

The average score on the South course was 72.43, compared with 69.56 on the North. No other PGA Tour event played on multiple courses has such a disparity.

A year ago, the North course

was 3.53 strokes easier than the South course at Torrey Pines. The next greatest difference in courses was at the Bob Hope Classic, where La Quinta was 2.35 strokes higher than Indian Wells.

Aaron Oberholser polished off his 64 on the North course and already was looking ahead.

"It's nice to get off to a good start, knowing I've got to play the Monster tomorrow," he said.

The topic of Lehman being a playing captain at the Ryder Cup didn't come up because of one good round. Winless since the 2000 Phoenix Open, left off the last two Ryder Cup teams, Lehman has been working hard on his short game and everything started coming together late last year.

He tied for fourth in the Canadian Open.

Then, he finished his year by playing in the final group three straight weeks — Greensboro, Las Vegas and Disney — although his putting let him down in all three.

He made his '05 debut last week in the Sony Open, where he tied for ninth.

"I'm doing a lot of things right that you need to do right out here," Lehman said. "It would have been nice to continue to the first tee on the South course and keep going."

# Clarett will get chance to live up to controversy

The NFL is full of heart-warming tales about guys who came out of nowhere to make it big.

Maurice Clarett's story will not be one of those. He may wind up going late in the draft, but he is not going to sneak up on anyone.

The one-time Ohio State running back and future celebrity slipped into the shadows more than two years ago, being glimpsed only occasionally inside a courtroom or at a rare workout, or else making out his former program in print and on TV.

But Clarett popped back into the news earlier this week when his name was included on Wednesday's list of underclassmen eligible for the April draft. And if he lets this chance slip the way he has so many others, what Clarett will find is that he's run out of rope.

"It's been a tough road, and that's behind him," San Diego General Manager A.J. Smith said.

"Whether you go in the first round, the seventh or walk into training camp a free agent, you're going to get your opportunity."

"This is his," Smith added, "and I, for one, wish him the best."

Clarett played his last football game with more than two years ago, but the lack of college experience or buzz, for that matter — is hardly his biggest obstacle. Patriots lineman Stephen Neal, breakout Charger tight end Antonio Gates and Colts tight end Marcus



their way toward the NFL, stepped up when their chances came, and are now reaping the rewards. Whether Clarett has the skill and work ethic to do the same is anybody's guess. But for the measuring that goes on, that's exactly what the draft is — a guessing game.

"Every kid does what he wants to do in terms of showcasing himself — that's their prerogative — and we observe," Smith said. "Then we make our decisions."

"Personally, I think all guys should stay in school. But some individuals have to do what they think is best for their families."

Before drawing the wrong conclusion, understand this is how Smith and his counterparts do business — officially, anyway.

Because the league bars a player from entering the draft until he's been out of high school for three years, GMs are supposed to wait for the league-approved list of underclassmen, then start studying them as thoroughly as they've been tracking the upper-

classmen.

Clarett tried to change that in a much-publicized antitrust case against the NFL, and lost on appeal. In the process, he got used to a platform for some unscrupulous actors — remember Jim Brown calling Clarett selfless and a "pioneer" — and lost more good-will than most people can afford.

Clarett showed up for the league's scouting combine last February memorably overweight and unprepared. The private workout he staged two months later to dazzle those same scouts was anything but dazzling. In rare interviews since, Clarett has come off both evasive and vindictive, leaving teams to wonder about his conditioning and the company he keeps.

Clarett told ESPN The Magazine in November that he would answer all those doubts at next month's combine.

"I'm thinking, 'NFL GMs know college players take money,'" he said, not getting off to a good start. "It was nothing like I stole something. Nothing like I'm running from the law or I'm dragging a girl down the stairs. No domestic violence. No nothing. [But] I got to clear myself up now, because it's affecting the minds of the GMs."

Vince Marrow has been telling people back in Columbus, Ohio, that his now 21-year-old cousin is in "spectacular" shape.

"Better than ever," Marrow claimed, because Clarett hasn't taken any hits in a while and he's

been lifting weights and running all the while. Clarett hasn't made himself available for confirmation, but there have been numerous sightings of workouts as far afield as Texas, Florida and California.

Certainly, few other people back at Ohio State would vouch for him. Clarett's hide-and-seek tales of handouts from boosters have already sent athletic director Andy Geiger into early retirement and the mess is still a long way from being cleaned up. NCAA investigators have been back there to check out Clarett's blasts more than once and they may have a satellite office up and running by the time the sanctions are being handed down.

But that's the beauty of the pros. They gave Barry Switzer a job and he had Oklahoma on double-secret probation all the time. More to the point, they understand that not every kid is as lucky or comes to them as polished as USC's Matt Leinart, gifted with talent and a supportive, well-off family, and able to delay launching his career until he's ready.

To the NFL, it matters only so much whether you were a wrestler in college, like Neal, or a budding career criminal, like Lawrence Phillips, or a troublemaker, like Clarett. It doesn't matter, either, that this draft is far deeper in training books than last year's was — or next year's looks to be.

Clarett will get the chance to



Former Ohio State RB Maurice Clarett has been seen only occasionally in the past two years, either in court or making accusations against his former program.

prove what he wanted to all along, that he is good enough to play on Sundays.

"He's so far off our radar right now that it will be a while before we get around to evaluating him. But he'll be treated like everybody else," Smith said. "I can guarantee that much."

Jim Little is a national sports columnist for the Associated Press. Write to him at: jlittle@ap.org

# Clemens coming back for 1 year, \$18M

BY RONALD BLUM  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Roger Clemens is coming back for one more year — and getting the highest salary for a pitcher in baseball history.

Clemens and the Houston Astros agreed Friday to an \$18 million, one-year contract, and the seven-time Cy Young Award winner signed the commitment to play for his 22nd major league season.

Houston called a news conference but didn't reveal the subject. A baseball source familiar with

the arrangements said it was to announce an agreement with Clemens that would give him a record salary for a pitcher, topping the \$17.5 million Pedro Martinez earned with Boston last year in the option year of his contract.

Clemens first retired after pitching for the New York Yankees in the 2003 World Series. But he changed his mind and agreed on Jan. 12 last year to join his hometown Astros, accepting a \$5 million, one-year deal that was well below his market price.

The 42-year-old right-hander

helped lead the Astros within one win of their first World Series appearance, earning \$1,825,000 in bonuses based largely on Houston's home attendance, then said again that he was "99 percent" retired.

But momentum built after he returned earlier this month from a Hawaiian vacation, and he asked for \$22 million salary — matching his uniform number — when proposed figures for salary arbitration were filed Tuesday. Houston offered \$13.5 million, leaving the midpoint at \$17.75 million.

His agents, Randy and Alan Hendrick, then negotiated the deal with the Astros on Wednesday and Thursday.

Clemens is agreeing to a contract that makes him the highest-paid pitcher for the fifth time, following deals with Boston in 1989 (\$2.5 million average), with the Red Sox in 1991 (\$5.38 million), with Toronto in December 1996 (\$8.25 million) and the Yankees in August 2000 (\$15.45 million). The contracts with Boston and New York made him the sport's highest-paid player.



Roger Clemens

# NASCAR changes Daytona qualifying

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — The unique qualifying format for the season-opening Daytona 500 has been given a facelift.

The front row for the race Feb. 20 still will be locked in after qualifying. Other than that, it's an all-new procedure for setting the starting lineup for the NASCAR Nextel Cup event.

Series director John Darby announced the changes Thursday, noting that the top 35 in last year's owners' points are assured a spot in the 43-car Daytona lineup. The order will be determined by qualifying on Feb. 13 and by twin 150-mile qualifying races on Feb. 17.

Darby said the starting order for those races, each extended by 25 miles and renamed the Gatorade Duel, will be set by qualifying.

The top 35 in points will be divided between the two, with the teams finishing in odd-numbered positions in 2004 in the first race and even-numbered finishers in the second.

Teams that didn't finish in the top 35 will make the twin lineups by virtue of their Daytona qualifying.

Starting positions in the 500-mile main event will be determined by results of the 150-mileers.

Filling out the lineup will be the top two non-top-35 finishers from each of the twin events and the remaining fastest drivers from qualifying.

NASCAR previously announced it has eliminated the use of provisional starters in 2005 and will assure the current top 35 in the car-owner points of making each race. The rest of the field at events after Daytona will be filled through qualifying.

The 43rd spot in the lineup will be held at each race for any former series champion who is not among the top 35 or does not make the field by through speed. At Daytona, that option probably will not be needed because all the active past champions except Terry Labonte and Bill Elliott, who are not entered, are among the top 35.

**Texas' top scorer, rebounder Tucker academically ineligible**

AUSTIN, Texas — Sophomore forward P.J. Tucker, the leading scorer and rebounder for No. 15 Texas, is academically ineligible and will miss the rest of the season. After failing to meet the minimum 12 credit-hour requirement, the school announced Thursday.

## Sports briefs

Tucker, averaging 13.7 points and 8.0 rebounds a game, will stay at school and be allowed to practice but is not eligible for competition.

The university has refused to comment on details of his problems, citing federal privacy laws that protect student records.

## Three Falcons miss second straight day of practice

FLOWERY BRANCH — Offensive tackle Todd Weisner and cornerback Kevin Mathis sat out practice for the Atlanta Falcons on Thursday because of ailing ankles, leaving a major question mark for the NFC championship game.

While coach Jim Mora said both players "were a lot better," they skipped practice for the second day in a row. The coach was hopeful both would be able to practice Friday.

Weisner has started all but one game at right tackle for Atlanta over the past three seasons. Mathis started 13 games this season, but Jason Webster probably will get the nod at right cornerback against the Eagles.

Backup defensive end Travis Hall also was listed as questionable, missing his second straight practice with a chest injury. He is one of only two holdovers from Atlanta's 1999 Super Bowl team.

## Vikings make Loney offensive coordinator

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — The Minnesota Vikings hired Steve Loney their new offensive coordinator Thursday, a day after the Miami Dolphins lured Scott Linehan away with a three-year contract.

The 52-year-old Loney also will retain his position as offensive line coach, which he has held for three years.

Loney was offensive coordinator at the University of Minnesota in 1998-99 and at his alma mater, Iowa State, from 1995-97 and 2000-01. He began his coaching career as a graduate assistant at Iowa State in 1974.

He inherits an offense that's been one of the NFL's best. The Vikings ranked second in the league in 2002, first in 2003 and fourth in 2004 in total yards.

Terms of Loney's deal were not disclosed.

## SEC will review call against Arkansas three-pointer

LITTLE ROCK — The Southeastern Conference said Thursday it would review whether officials made the right call by disallowing a three-point basket by Arkansas that would have given the Razorbacks their first conference victory on the road in nearly two years.

LSU beat Arkansas 66-63 in overtime Wednesday night, but officials made a call that Arkansas coach Stan Heath said compromised the integrity of the game. The three-man crew changed a three-point basket to a two-pointer, wiping out an apparent 59-58 Arkansas victory in regulation.

DeWayne Peery, the SEC's associate director for media relations, said basketball officials supervisor Dan Guthrie should provide videotape of the game Friday. He said he said the officials followed procedures correctly in reviewing the shot, but that a decision couldn't be made regarding the specific call until the tape was in.

## Giles agrees to \$2.35 million, one-year contract with Braves

ATLANTA — Second baseman Marcus Giles skipped salary arbitration by agreeing Thursday to a \$2.35 million, one-year contract with the Atlanta Braves.

Giles received a big raise from the \$430,000 he made last season. Eligible for arbitration for the first time, he had asked for \$2.7 million, while the Braves had offered \$2.05 million.

The 26-year-old infielder doubled 311 last season, with eight homers, 48 RBIs and 17 stolen bases. He missed 52 games last year breaking his right collarbone in a collision with Andrew Jones.

In 2003, Giles was voted to start the All-Star Game, though he couldn't play because of a concussion. He had his best season, hitting .316 with 21 homers, 69 RBIs and 14 stolen bases.

## Devil Rays agree to contract with first-round draft pick

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — The long wait is over for Tampa Bay Devil Rays pitching prospect Jeff Niemann.

The fourth pick in the draft last June, Niemann agreed to terms Thursday on a major league contract worth \$2.2 million over five years, including a \$3.2 million signing bonus.

The 6-foot-9, 260-pound right-hander will earn \$100,000 in the minors this year. If he makes a quicker-than-expected transition from college to the majors, he'd make \$136,000.

Niemann went 29-4 with a 2.41 ERA in three seasons at Rice, including 17-0 to an NCAA Division I record and help the Owls win the College World Series in 1996. He was 6-3 with three saves and a 3.02 ERA in 17 games for the Owls in 2004, allowing just 59 hits in 80 1/3 innings while striking out 94 and holding opponents to a .207 batting average.

## E. Conn. basketball player dies after collapsing at game

WORCESTER, Mass. — Eastern Connecticut guard Antoine Key died Thursday night after collapsing during the opening minutes of a game at Worcester State. Eastern personnel were unable to revive Key, 22, and rushed him to a Worcester hospital, where he was pronounced dead, Eastern officials said.

It was not immediately clear what caused Key to collapse during the game, which was suspended.

Key, a 6-foot-4 senior, transferred from Southern Connecticut in the fall of 2003. He started all 14 games this season and was averaging 7.6 points and 2.8 rebounds.

## Temple football to stay in Division I-A

PHILADELPHIA — Temple's football program will remain in Division I-A but will play without a conference next season, the school announced Thursday.

A 12-member task force has been studying the future of Temple football since the summer. It made the recommendation to the chairman of Temple's board of trustees, Howard Ganes.

Temple was kicked out of the Big East for failing to meet minimum requirements for membership, mostly related to attendance, facilities and fielding a competitive team.

## Men's super-G wiped out

KITZBUHNER, Austria — The men's World Cup super-G scheduled for Friday was called off because of fog, freezing rain and unrelenting snow.

The race will probably be rescheduled for Monday, after Saturday's downhill and Sunday's slalom on the Hahnenkamm.

# Two days of informal talks net nothing in NHL lockout

BY IRA PODELL  
The Associated Press

Two days of talking amounted to much of the same in the NHL lockout saga no progress made, and more valuable time lost.

Even talking Commissioner Gary Bettman and union chief Bob Goodenow out of the equation for two days didn't bridge the gap between the NHL and the players' association. The sides still are no closer to a deal four months into the lockout, and there are no signs they will reach an accord in time to save this hockey season.

Representatives from the league and union met for 4 1/2 hours Thursday in Toronto, the second straight day they held discussions in an attempt to end the stalemate that has kept hockey news limited to negotiations in various North American airports.

"I can't say we're any closer," said Bill Daly, the NHL's chief legal officer.

They also held a five-hour meeting at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport on Wednesday, but they remained apart on the idea of cost certainty, a concept the players' association says is an unacceptable salary cap.

No new meetings have been scheduled, although both Daly and players' association senior director Ted Sackin said that the lines of communication remain open.

"We still continue to have a gap," Daly said. "We've had a much more fullsome discussion of all the elements of the system, but the bottom line is that we cannot come to a divide on the philosophical issue."

Just like Wednesday, there were breaks in the negotiations so each group could huddle separately.

Following the two-day session, the only thing the sides appeared to agree on was that they still are far apart. Although the dialogue was described as being positive, it didn't move anyone to change position on the key issue.

More than half of the regular season's 71 of 1,230 games through Thursday — has been wiped out so far, plus the All-Star Game.

# Trotter's back creating mayhem in Philadelphia

## Linebacker's return after two years in Washington has bolstered defense

BY ROB MAADDI  
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Jeremiah Trotter was unemployed and seemingly out of options. So he picked up a phone, called his former coach and apologized for the behavior that led to his departure from Philadelphia three years ago.

Seven months later, the hard-hitting middle linebacker is going back to the Pro Bowl, and the Eagles again are one victory away from playing in the Super Bowl.

"I believe this is our year," said Trotter, who came back to the Eagles last summer after two seasons in Washington. "I'm just excited to be here."

The Eagles, who lost the past three NFC championship games, host Atlanta on Sunday.

Trotter's return to Philly was a stunner, considering he left on bitter terms after a contract dispute. One simple conversation with Eagles coach Andy Reid last summer soothed any hurt feelings.

Reid actually extended the first olive branch, reaching out to Trotter when he injured his knee in his first season with the Redskins. In the time Trotter signed a one-year contract for the veterans' minimum of about \$660,000, the past was forgotten.

"I came back to go all the way," Trotter said. "We're in great position now to do that, and we still have some unfinished business."

Though he made the Pro Bowl



Game time is Central European.

his last two seasons with the Eagles, Trotter accepted a backup role when he came back. He made the most of his chance to get on the field early in the year by playing well on special teams.

Midway through the season, defensive coordinator Jim Johnson inserted Trotter into the starting lineup and moved Mark Simoneau to the weakside spot.

The Eagles were 24th on defense and 27th against the run when Trotter reclaimed his job before the first game. In the next six games, the defense allowed averages of just 70.2 yards rushing, 227.2 total yards and 10.7 points per game. The Eagles gave up the fewest points in the NFC (260) during the regular season.

Trotter made such an impact on the defense that he earned a trip to the Pro Bowl after making only seven starts. He finished the season with 80 tackles, one sack and three hurries.

The thing about Trotter is he brings a physical presence to the game," Johnson said. "He's always been a good middle line-



Linebacker Jeremiah Trotter, right, tackles Vikings quarterback Daunte Culpepper (11) during Sunday's playoff game in Philadelphia. Trotter had seven tackles, a half-sack and an interception in the 27-14 victory.

backer as far as being very physical inside. He's a good tempo-setter and he's done a great job."

In Philadelphia's 27-14 second-round playoff victory over Minnesota, Trotter led the defense with seven tackles, had a half-sack and made a key interception.

Trotter's teammates appreciate the way he handled being a backup-up, praise him for his leadership and welcome the attitude he brings to the field.

"He is a leader," All-Pro safety Brian Dawkins said. "In the huddle, there is a certain way he carries himself. There is a mentality that he plays with and tries to let that rub off on other guys the way

that he approaches it and the way that he makes a play."

Trotter was the first big-name player to leave the Eagles under Reid's philosophy of replacing expensive veterans with cheaper, younger players. He signed a seven-year, \$35 million contract with the Redskins but had trouble adjusting to a new defensive scheme, was plagued by injuries and failed to live up to expectations.

"It was a real humbling, learning experience," Trotter said. "It made me a better player. The more you play, the more you get. You get smarter, you get wiser, you understand the game more."

# Super: Vick will need some help in title game

SUPER, FROM BACK PAGE

But even Michael Jordan needed his supporting cast to come through to win NBA championships with the Chicago Bulls. Scottie Pippen was beside him for all six, and Dennis Rodman pulled down rebounds for three.

Great quarterbacks can bring teams to the playoffs, but Super Bowl wins are usually a team affair. Tom Brady was very good in winning two, but sometimes it seems as if the New England Patriots could plug anyone into any position in coach Bill Belichick's system and win.

And who remembers who the quarterback even was on a Baltimore Ravens team that was so dominant defensively that the New York Giants never had a chance to get in the game. (Hint, his initials were T.D.)

Vick may be the best player on either side of the field Sunday, but he faces odds-makers know history about as well as they know how to set point spreads. That's why the Eagles are 4½-point favorites to break their three-game NFC championship game losing streak.

Yes, Vick is everything you'd ever want in a quarterback. But it will take more than one great player before the Falcons can bring themselves for Super Bowl rings.

Tim Dahlberg is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at: tddahlberg@aol.org

# Patriots' perfectionist thrives in harsh conditions

BY HOWARD ULMAN  
The Associated Press

FOXBORO, Mass. — Adam Vinatieri approached the ball, drove it toward the uprights and got mad when the field goal missed.

And that was just during a workout last spring.

"There's no one out here except for us two," said Josh Miller, who had just signed as the New England Patriots holder and punter. "We were also at 58 yards. So I said, 'OK, that's what I'm part of and it's pretty cool.'"

Vinatieri takes every kick seriously — whether it's an extra point in a regular-season blowout or a field goal that wins the Super Bowl, whether he's in a dome or during snow.

Again, it may be the difference again in the AFC championship game between two strong defenses on Sunday in Pittsburgh where snow showers are in the forecast, something he grew up with in Yankton, S.D.

"I try to take every kick exactly the same and not think about, oh, this is the playoffs," Vinatieri

said. "You don't know if a kick in the first quarter or the kick at the end of the game is going to make the difference."

Two of the biggest field goals of his career came in heavy snow on the way to the Patriots first championship. A 45-yarder with 34 seconds left forced overtime, and a 23-yarder beat Oakland 16-13 on Jan. 19, 2002.

As usual, the pressure didn't hurt him.

"I was thinking more about trying to make sure I got good footing and got the ball in the air than in the other things that that kick meant," Vinatieri said.

Two weeks later, inside the Superdome in New Orleans his 45-yard field goal on the last play gave the Patriots their first Super Bowl win, 20-17 over St. Louis. He also won last year's Super Bowl indoors in Houston with a 41-yard kick with four seconds left in a 32-29 win over Carolina. But he leaves those memories on the sideline.

"You have to go out and re-establish yourself every single day," Vinatieri said Thursday. "Sure,



Game time is Central European.

three years ago we had a fun day in the snow and the outcome worked out well, but something in the past isn't going to guarantee anything in the future."

Plenty has worked out well in his nine seasons since joining the Patriots as a free agent in 1996.

This season he led the NFL in scoring and has made 24 of his past 25 field goal attempts. He's kicked 17 game-winning field goals in the regular season and playoffs and, from inside the 40-yard line, he's missed just 21 of 203 kicks.

"He's as good at what he does as (Michael) Jordan at what he does," Miller said. "If he's as good

at his trade and used it somewhere else, he'd change the world. But he's a kicker and he has to just settle for being the best kicker."

Heinz Field in Pittsburgh is known as a tough place to kick.

Last weekend, Doug Brien of the New York Jets missed two field-goal attempts late in the fourth quarter and the Steelers won in overtime.

This Sunday, Vinatieri will check the field well before the game and decide which shoes to wear.

"It's going to be cold probably and the field's probably in pretty tough shape," he said. "The worse the weather conditions get, the more controlled you have to be."

Patriots coach Bill Belichick probably would trust Vinatieri in a blizzard.

"I can kick in any conditions," Belichick said. "Nothing really seems to affect him."

Not even a roaring crowd at Heinz Field with a trip to the Super Bowl at stake.

"If you step on the field and just think about the kicking instead of the other stuff, take a big deep

breath and really focus on your job," Vinatieri said, "then the rest of the stuff disappears, the crowd messes with that stuff. You really don't hear it."

Even though he has practiced in snow, chances are the conditions in Pittsburgh will be different.

"You really can't plan for those type of things," long snapper Lonnie Paxton said. "The snow that you're going to bunch up (in practice) is not going to be the same as it is on the field."

Besides, there's no way to be sure of Sunday's conditions since forecasts change.

"Some other front has whipped in from somewhere or other and some tree has blocked this front," Belichick said with a smile. "If you try to be weatherman with the team you'd lose their respect pretty quickly because you really don't know what you're talking about."

Vinatieri has made big kicks in all conditions but admits there was a time when he did feel pressure.

"Probably in my rookie year, every single time I stepped on the field to kick for a game."

That was a long time and two Super Bowl-winning kicks ago.

## SPORTS



Astros agree to give Clemens one-year, \$18 million contract, a record for pitchers, Page 30

# One-man teams are hardly super

BY TIM DAHLBERG  
The Associated Press

There's no point in stating the obvious. Every football fan in America who has even caught a glimpse of Michael Vick play football knows what the Philadelphia Eagles must do Sunday to finally get into the Super Bowl.

The Atlanta Falcons need to know something, too, if they plan to be playing in Jacksonville two weeks from Sunday.

## Analysis

That is, as good as Vick is — and there's little doubt he is incredibly good — one player can't win a ring by himself.

If you're searching for evidence, the history of the NFL is littered with it. It took John Elway 15 years to win a Super Bowl. Dan Marino never won one and Barry Sanders never had a sniff at the big game.

Or you can just ask Vick, who seems to understand he will need every bit of help he can get if the Falcons are to pull a minor upset and win the NFC championship in Philadelphia.

"You know it's going to be a four-quarter football game and you know, we've got to make sure everybody's come to play and when everybody's name is called or whoever's name is called, they're ready," Vick said Wednesday. "It's pretty much on everybody."

Fortunately for Vick, the Falcons bring a pretty good supporting cast into the biggest game he has played in his young pro career.

They've got a running game that's made twice as good by Vick's ability to turn sacks into gains, special teams that can turn a game around, and a defense that outscored St. Louis 2-0 in the second half its last time out.

## Vick's supporting cast



**Tight end Alge Crumpler** led Atlanta in receptions (48), receiving yards (774 yards) and TD catches (six). He is Vick's go-to receiver inside the 20-yard line.



**End Patrick Kerney** (97) is a main component of a defense that led the league in sacks (48), ranked eighth in the NFL against the run (105 yards per game) and third in the NFC with 23 takeaways.



**Allan Rossum** was the force behind the NFL's top punt-return unit (12.4 yards per return). He set a league playoff record for punt return yardage last week (152).



**Warrick Dunn** of the Rams, 1,106 yards this season led the NFL No. 1-ranked rushing offense (167 yards per game). He also led the team with nine touchdowns.

Without Vick, it's a decent enough team. Add in a quarterback who can create havoc with his feet and it can be a team with the potential to dominate, as the Rams found out.

But it's also a team with the potential to stink the place up, just as the Falcons did in losing 27-0 last month in Tampa Bay.

Vick was his usual exciting self outside the pocket that day, but also threw two in-

terceptions, lost two fumbles and was sacked five times.

That won't do in Philadelphia, where Vick not only has to play well, but

Warrick Dunn has to be a threat and the special teams must produce. Most critical of all, Vick will need his receivers to step up their games against a pass defense loaded with Pro Bowlers should the Eagles manage to contain him as they did in the playoffs two years ago.

Atlanta coach Jim Mora believes they will do just that.

"Our receivers are very capable of stepping up and making plays. We haven't asked them to do that much recently, but, if called upon, they'll accept the challenge," Mora said. "I really believe they will."

That didn't happen in the 2002 divisional playoffs, when the hype over the matchup between Vick and Donovan McNabb evaporated as the game turned into a defensive struggle that the Eagles won 20-6.

Vick, of course, is a more seasoned and experienced quarterback than the sophomore pro who ran for only 30 yards in that game. He made his imprint on last week's victory over the Rams on only the third offensive play for the Falcons when he tucked the ball and ran 47 yards to set up a score.

If that happens early against Philadelphia, it could damage the already fragile psyche of an Eagles team that has lost three straight NFC championship games. One amazing play, and under their green helmets, they might be thinking "Oh, no, here we go again!"

Maybe. But the guess here is it's going to take a lot more than Vick to beat the Eagles this time.

"People say I'm the X-factor and I'm the key to winning," Vick said. "I think the key to winning is our team coming to play as a team and playing together."

That's what is going to win the football game for us, I promise you."

Vick might be excused for falling back on jock clichés about being team players to keep his teammates happy. The 24-year-old didn't, after all, get the NFL's richest contract — which included \$37 million in bonuses last month — because he's a nice guy.

No, Vick got it because he's something special: a rare combination of speed, moves and arm that the NFL has never seen before and will likely not see again for some time.

SEE SUPER ON PAGE 31

**New England's Vinatieri constantly striving for perfection; Trotter boosts Eagles' defense**

Page 31



**McGrady jams in return to Orlando**

Page 25



**Top-ranked Illinois gets a lift from Head in OT win over No. 23 Iowa; Cincy's Williams on target after position change**

Page 28